

# FRESHWATER

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Freshwater Society is a nonprofit organization working to inspire and empower people to value and preserve our freshwater resources.

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March 23, 2023

Senator Fong Hawj  
Environment, Climate and Legacy Committee  
3231 Minnesota Senate Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Sen. Hawj and Committee members:

We are writing in support of the Governor's Environment and Natural Resources Budget bill, SF2483, in particular the menu of investment tools included that address climate change and respond to critical threats facing drinking water in Minnesota.

**Soil Health.** \$27 million for the biennium with ongoing base to the Board of Water and Soil Resources. Improving soil health has multiple benefits across the landscape. Providing base funding recognizes the complexity and multiyear work needed for results. It improves the microscopic soil community that sequesters carbon in soil, taking carbon and other greenhouse gases from the atmosphere; the microbes create soil structure that allows mega-rain events to infiltrate rather than runoff, keeping water and nutrients in place.

**Water Storage.** \$17 million, one-time GF funding, with an ongoing \$480,000 base to the Board of Water and Soil Resources. Water storage reduces artificially high-water levels in rivers and minimizes erosion by temporarily storing water, at critical times, in key places. Combined with the soil health program, water storage addresses rapid agricultural runoff loaded with nutrients.

**Resilient Communities Grants and Technical Assistance.** \$173.88 million in one-time funds, with an ongoing base-budget of \$1.12 million going forward to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. This provides critical resources to help communities plan and implement projects that will support adaptation to a warmer and wetter Minnesota. This money is need to assess infrastructure needs and plan for changes so that local infrastructure can withstand flooding and other climate stressors.

**Drinking Water Protection and PFAS Response.** \$25 million, one-time funds. These funds are essential for planning, designing, and bidding public water treatment systems to combat the widespread Per- and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) contamination in drinking water. The funds will also be used for sampling and installing treatment on private wells in areas of known impacts and for investigating sources of PFAS contamination to the public water systems.

**Implement Minnesota's PFAS Blueprint.** \$2.07 million/year from the Environmental Fund to implement Minnesota's PFAS Blueprint. Additional staff would begin with the first major initiative, the PFAS Monitoring Plan, which calls for gathering Minnesota-specific information; identifying areas of concerns and collecting data to prioritize sources of PFAS to prevent pollution.

Sincerely,

Carrie Jennings, Research and Policy Director

