



DEDICATED TO A STRONG GREATER MINNESOTA

March 29, 2023

**RE: Senate Environment and Natural Resources Omnibus bill**

Dear Senator Hawj and committee members:

I am reaching out on behalf of the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities (CGMC) to comment on the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Omnibus bill. The CGMC is a group of more than 100 cities located outside the metropolitan area. Our members are dedicated to a stronger Greater Minnesota and are focused on developing viable, progressive communities for families and businesses through good local government and strong economic growth. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this legislation.

**MORE FUNDING NEEDED FOR MPCA WATER QUALITY EFFORTS**

One of the most important functions that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) performs is regulating water quality. Because our member cities frequently interact with this department, we greatly appreciate the inclusion of additional funding for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's water quality work. However, we are extremely disappointed that the agency's request for ongoing funds beyond this biennium was not included. The failure to include this funding in the tails will only result in increased fees for municipalities in the future. We urge the committee to find ongoing funding for this important work.

**PARKS AND TRAILS FUNDING**

We want to express our thanks for including the regional parks and trails of Greater Minnesota in the Lottery-in-Lieu formula with 2 percent of the revenues. It is a recognition of the importance that regional parks and trails play to all Minnesotans, regardless of whether they live in Greater Minnesota or the metropolitan area.

We are disappointed, however, that this committee did not provide any general fund dollars for Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission, as requested in Senator Hauschild's bill, S.F. 527. This bill made a simple request seeking some parity with the regional parks of the metropolitan area by providing \$500,000 per year for Commission. Given that this omnibus bill provides close to \$40 million dollars in one-time and on-going funds to the metropolitan regional parks, Greater Minnesota's modest request should not have been ignored. The residents of Greater Minnesota are as deserving of strong regional parks and trails as the residents of the metropolitan area.

## **PFAS PROVISIONS**

We appreciate this committee's continuing focus on addressing the potential health hazards associated with per-and-polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) by appropriating funds to the MPCA to address PFAS contamination in drinking water (12.23 – 12.33) and to support the identification and reduction of the sources of PFAS (15.19 – 15.29). This bill contains multiple provisions aimed at eliminating or reducing the sources of PFAS in our air and water. We believe that addressing PFAS at the source is the best approach and support such efforts to the extent that they are grounded in the best available science.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this omnibus bill. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. D. H.", with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Brian Holmer  
President, Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities  
Mayor, Thief River Falls