

# 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 30, 2023

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

Dear Chair Hawj and Committee Members;

Thank you for your hard work on priority issues facing Minnesotans during this whirlwind session. As you finalize your budget bill, SF2438, we wanted to extend our appreciation for the A3-DE amendment and including resources that address climate change and respond to critical threats facing drinking water in Minnesota.

Thank you for including \$17 million in one-time funding for **Water Storage** which 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 and helps everyone downstream.

Your inclusion of **Soil Health** at \$26.7 million for the biennium will pay dividends for years to come. Improving soil health achieves the same and more benefits and can be seen as green infrastructure. Providing base funding recognizes the complexity and multiyear work needed to improve the microscopic soil community that 1) increases the diversity of microbes that 2) create soil structure and 3) sequester carbon in soil and removing carbon and other greenhouse gasses from the atmosphere. This win-win-win keeps water where it falls by allowing mega-rain events to infiltrate rather than runoff, keeps water and nutrients in place, and builds climate resilience. It is the fundamental tool in regenerative—not extractive agriculture.

Thank you for including full funding for the **Resilient Communities Grants and Technical Assistance** program. This will provide communities the needed resources to plan and implement projects to adapt to a warmer and wetter Minnesota. One-time money would help assess infrastructure needs and plan for changes so that local infrastructure can withstand flooding and other climate stressors.


Thank you for the \$25 million in one-time funds for **Drinking Water Protection and PFAS Response**, 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.

Thank you for providing funding 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.



We appreciate the many challenges and priorities that you and the Committee must balance. Thank you for your support of important tools for addressing climate change in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Carrie E. Jennings".

Carrie Jennings, Research and Policy Director,  
Jen Kader, Director for Engagement and Systems Change