



The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota,
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Senator Foug Hawj
3231 Minnesota Senate Building
Senate Environment, Climate and Legacy Committee
95 University Ave W.
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 30, 2023

Dear Chair Hawj and Members of the Senate Environment, Climate and Legacy Committee,

As the Committee reviews the DE amendment to SF2438, we write to share our support for proposed general fund investments in programs that will benefit people and nature across the state. We are particularly pleased to see the following appropriations included:

Pollution Control Agency (PCA):

- \$173,800,000 for Resilient Communities – Water Infrastructure Grants (*Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 2, (k)*)

Department of Natural Resources (DNR):

- \$2,300,000 for nongame wildlife management (*Art. 1, Sec. 3, Subd. 3, (g)*)
- \$1,566,000 for Protect and Restore Carbon Storage in Peatlands (*Art. 1, Sec. 3, Subd. 3, (l)*)
- \$395,000 for Invasive Carp Removal and Surveys (*Art. 1, Sec. 3, Subd. 3, (o)*)
- \$325,000 for Invasive Carp Study (*Art. 1, Sec. 3, Subd. 3, (p)*)
- \$4,172,000 for Private Forest Landowner Technical Assistance (*Art. 1, Sec. 3, Subd. 4, (h)*)
- \$800,000 for Accelerated Tree Seed Collection (*Art. 1, Sec. 3, Subd. 4, (i)*)
- \$17,800,000 one-time and \$400,000 ongoing per year for MN ReLeaf Program – Community Tree Replacement (*Art. 1, Sec. 3, Subd. 4, (j)*)
- \$3,000,000 for Reforestation on State-Managed Lands (*Art. 1, Sec. 3, Subd. 4, (k)*)
- \$5,134,000 for Enhancing Grasslands and Restoring Wetlands for Carbon Capture (*Art. 1, Sec. 3, Subd. 6, (e)*)

Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR):

- \$1,000,000 for Habitat-Friendly Utilities (*Art. 1, Sec. 4, (j)*)
- \$4,000,000 for Climate - Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program (*Art. 1, Sec. 4, (k)*)
- \$16,000,000 for Climate – Private Grasslands/Working Lands Easements (*Art. 1, Sec. 4, (m)*)
- \$15,000,000 for Private Peatland Restoration for Carbon Sequestration (*Art. 1, Sec. 4, (n)*)
- \$17,000,000 for Climate Adaptation – Water Storage & Treatment (*Art. 1, Sec. 4, (o)*)



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In addition to these appropriations, we also offer the following reflections on proposed appropriations in the bill that we are pleased to see or that the committee has considered previously, but hope will be further discussed with these additional considerations:

- **(DNR) \$5,134,000 for Enhancing Grasslands and Restoring Wetlands for Carbon Capture** (*Art. 1, Sec. 3, Subd. 6, (e)*) We encourage the committee to match the Governor's budget request of \$10,000,000 for this program should opportunity allow.
- **(BWSR) \$4,000,000 for the Climate - Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program** (*Art. 1, Sec. 4, (k)*) We encourage the committee to match the Governor's budget request of \$9,000,000 for this program should opportunity allow.
- **(BWSR) \$16,000,000 for Climate – Private Grasslands/Working Lands Easements** (*Art. 1, Sec. 4, (m)*) We encourage the committee to match the Governor's budget request of \$22,000,000 for this program should opportunity allow.
- **(DNR) Investing in Minnesota's Wildlife and Aquatic Management Areas:** We encourage the committee to consider an investment in land protection programs to reflect the Governor's budget request of \$3,000,000. Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and Aquatic Management Areas (AMAs) provide multiple benefits for wildlife and aquatic habitat, water quality, biodiversity, and carbon sequestration and remain accessible for public recreation.
- **(BWSR) Climate Mitigation and Resiliency for RIM Easements:** If an opportunity presents arises, we encourage the committee to consider an investment as reflected in the Governor's budget \$7,100,000 for Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) easements, which would permanently protect habitat with high carbon sequestration potential.

Each of these programs provide multiple benefits that touch all Minnesotans' lives, including carbon sequestration, water quality improvements, water quantity benefits, resiliency including flood mitigation, air quality improvements, outdoor recreation opportunities, habitat and more.

As the committee considers investments that can address climate change and make Minnesota more resilient, we encourage you to include these appropriations alongside additional natural climate solutions in other committee areas like Agriculture, Capital Investment, and Energy & Climate.

Thank you for your work on behalf of Minnesotans and the State's environment and natural resources.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Pinkalla
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