

TO: Keep It Clean Coalition

DATE: 02/25/2024

ATTN: Robyn Dwight

SUBJECT: Letter of Support for Keep It Clean Program bill

I fully support HF 3662 Keep It Clean Program and Appropriation and the companion in the Senate SF 3957.

As a longtime resident of the Mille Lacs area and volunteer for the Mille Lacs Watershed Management Group and the Mille Lacs Area Community Foundation, I've lived with and picked up trash and garbage left from the ice fishing season and errant road travelers for about 40 years. With the advent of seasonal ice cities and wheelhouses, trash, including plastics, wood blocking, styrofoam and more, has become an increasing eye sore, wildlife and human hazard, and environmental pollutant.

As the grass-roots Keep It Clean initiative took off in the Mille Lacs area in 2021, we've seen significant reduction in trash left behind from our seasonal ice cities. However, we have faced this as a perennial problem that needs to be addressed for the foreseeable future, not only here, but across the State. In addition, our local winterized septic dump stations are woefully inadequate for the volume of wheelhouses we now see. Unfortunately, without easy access, the less responsible wheelhouse traveler may simply dump their sewage on the ice or along our roads.

Long-term and ongoing awareness campaigns, educational programs, effective enforcement of existing laws, and monies for sewage disposal infrastructure are needed by my community and communities across the State. Our volunteer organizations recognized the problem, took action, and brought the Legislature's attention to the long-term solutions that are needed with HF 3662/SF3957.

Barbara Eller

*Barbara Eller*

Member, [Mille Lacs Lake Watershed Management Group](#)

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