

April 17, 2024

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

Thank you for your work on SF 3887, the Senate's Environment Supplemental Finance Bill. The Committee has done a good job crafting SF 3887. However, Section 34 of Article 2 sets the very dangerous precedent of diverting Game and Fish Fund dollars for private landowners' hobbies.

I am writing as a former Chair of the Game and Fish Fund Budgetary Oversight Committee to express my concerns over the proposed diversion of Game and Fish Fund monies to private landowners who wish to propagate destructive beavers on their land and even push them onto their neighbors' properties.

Article 2, Section 34 of the proposed A-7 amendment would establish a grant program funded by the Game and Fish Fund for nonlethal "management" of beavers that are causing destruction. Beavers are very abundant throughout Minnesota and occupy nearly all available habitat. Their activities - dam building and tree cutting - can cause substantial damage to roads, trees, and buildings. Local governments and private landowners have been removing destructive beavers for decades at their own expense. Some private landowners have chosen to encourage and propagate more beavers on their property, accepting the increasing damage and costs as a consequence of their choices. They remain free to do so using their own resources.

However, this provision would in effect force hunters and anglers to pay landowners who choose this hobby for their purchase of expensive flow devices (which may or may not be effective), tree protection measures, and replacement tree plantings made necessary by accommodating destructive beavers. This diversion of Game and Fish Funds for landowners' private hobby is inappropriate and would set a dangerous precedent. And there are numerous underfunded fish and wildlife programs where these funds could be better spent to benefit all Minnesotans.

I respectfully urge the Committee to reconsider and remove this section from SF 3887 as soon as possible in the legislative process.

Thank you for considering my concerns.

Sincerely,

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