

Central Iron Range Sanitary Sewer District

April 15, 2024

Representative Aisha Gomez, Chair, House Tax Committee
Representative Dave Lislegard, Chair, House Property Tax Division
Senator Ann Rest, Chair, Senate Tax Committee
Senator Grant Hauschild
Minnesota State Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Gomez, Chair Rest, Chair Lislegard and Senator Hauschild:

RE: H.F. 5198, Rep. Lislegard's Property Tax Division Report & S.F. 5435

I appreciate Rep. Lislegard and Sen. Hauschild including funding for the Central Iron Range Sanitary Sewer District (CIRSSD) in their bills. This grant will help us with much needed wastewater conveyance system infrastructure upgrades on the Iron Range which were envisioned in the District's Comprehensive Plan. These improvements are critical for providing increased flow capacity along the Hwy 169 corridor for desperately needed residential, commercial, and industrial development.

The CIRSSD concept was initiated in 2002 with the planning of a regional facility to serve the St. Louis County Range communities of Hibbing, Chisholm, Buhl, and Kinney as well as Balkan and Great Scott Townships and the Minnesota Territory occupied by the Minnesota Discovery Center. This process was spearheaded by the Central Iron Range Initiative (CIRI). Through legislative action the District was formed as a "Municipal" subdivision of the State. From 2002 through 2008, the District struggled to reach consensus among the communities as to the future direction of the District as well as to gain support and participation from the City of Hibbing and Balkan Township.

In late 2008, the CIRSSD was legislatively disbanded due to the lack of support from the City of Hibbing and Balkan Township. Through the tenacity of the leaders of Chisholm, Buhl, Kinney, Great Scott Township, and the local legislative delegation, the CIRSSD was reconfigured and legislatively formed again in mid-2009, without the City of Hibbing and Balkan Township.

Work began immediately to modify the project "Facility Plan" identifying a centralized "green field" facility adjacent to the existing Chisholm Wastewater Treatment Ponds. The project included construction of new sewage pumping stations and sewage conveyance piping in Chisholm and Buhl and rehabilitation of the Kinney pumping facility. With a very condensed schedule to receive project funding to meet NPDES Permit construction schedule deadlines, the entire project was designed in four months, WIF and CWRF funding was secured, and construction began late in 2010. The project construction was substantially complete and flow from Buhl was directed to the facility in December 2013. At that point the Buhl facility was decommissioned. In March 2014, flow began to be diverted

from the Chisholm facility with the subsequent decommissioning of that facility. Full operation of the CIRSSD Craig S. Pulford Wastewater Treatment Facility began with the introduction of Chisholm wastewater flow.

In compliance with the "Schedule of Construction - Mercury Treatment" in the CIRSSD NPDES Permit, the District submitted its Facility Plan for a Mercury Removal Facility prior to the March 1, 2015, deadline. Plans and Specifications were submitted to MPCA for review and approval prior to December 1, 2015. Following a competitive bid process, award and notice to proceed was given to Rice Lake Construction Group prior to April 1, 2016. The District was awarded PSIG and SRF Loan proceeds to help fund the \$5,000,000 project. Despite a four-month delay in delivery of the cloth disc filters, the District initiated operation on February 27, 2017, and attained compliance with Final Mercury Limits on March 3, 2017, before the March 23, 2017, compliance deadline.

The CIRSSD NPDES Permit includes some of the most stringent discharge limits in the state due to its discharge into the Great Lakes Basin, mandated by Federal regulation under the Great Lakes Initiative. The District is proud of the fact the facility has maintained 100% compliance with all discharge limits, including Mercury, from facility startup to date. The District is recognized annually by the MPCA through its Outstanding Operation Achievement Award.

With increasing interest from developers in residential, commercial, and industrial projects along the Hwy 169 corridor from Kinney to Buhl and Chisholm, the CIRSSD is taking a proactive approach to seek funding to design and construct conveyance system capacity upgrades in Buhl and provide additional capital facility equipment improvements and facilities for conveyance and pumping of increased flows critical to providing service to prospective residential, commercial and industrial developers along the corridor.

We appreciate this money being reinvested into our local communities and appreciate Rep. Lislegard and Sen. Hauschild for introducing this legislation.

Respectfully,



Norm Miranda
Executive Director

CC: Ryan Pervenante, CIRSSD Board Chair and Board Members