



# MASWCD

## Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

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April 30, 2024

Senator Ann Rest, Chair  
Senate Taxes Committee  
328 Capitol, St. Paul, MN 55155

### RE: Senate File 5234 A2-DE - Omnibus Tax Bill

Dear Chair Rest and Senate Taxes Committee Members:

On behalf of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD), thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the 2024 Senate Omnibus Tax Bill. MASWCD represents the state's locally elected SWCD boards and their professional staff.

### Background

The inclusion of SWCD Aid in the 2023 tax bill established a desperately needed standing, statutory appropriation of general funds from the Department of Revenue to Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), similar to state aids for other elected units of local government. Distributed to the state's 88 SWCDs as well as Hennepin and Ramsey Counties, we are tremendously grateful for SWCD Aid and the recognition it represents for the important work of SWCD boards and their professional staff toward clean water and healthy soil.

Our 2023 request was \$22 million per year, an amount that though not solving SWCD funding challenges, would have been gotten us closer to meeting our statewide shortfall. The funding amounts for SWCD Aid were set at \$15 million per year for 2023 and 2024, and \$12 million per year for 2025 and beyond. This decrease to \$12 million, the level of funding SWCDs received the four years prior to the establishment of SWCD Aid, presents significant challenges. Senate File 4422 carried by Sen. Hauschild, sets out a path to prevent this fiscal cliff and would set the appropriation amount in statute to \$16 million for aids payable in 2025 and beyond.

### Supplemental 2024 SWCD Aid

With that background, we greatly appreciate the Supplemental 2024 SWCD Aid Distribution set out starting on line 46.23 of the bill. An additional \$2 million in one-time funding in calendar year 2024 is a meaningful step in the direction of more adequately funding SWCDs as they implement their statutory duties. While we continue to look for opportunities to improve the funding for 2025 and beyond, we support this supplemental funding provision and look forward to staying engaged on this issue in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

Chuck Rau  
MASWCD President