



Minnesota Conservation Officers Association

President – Joseph Stattelman
Vice President – Caleb Silgjord

Secretary – Shane Osborne
Treasurer – Joel Heyn

3/17/25

Dear Committee Chair and respected Committee Members,

It has come to our attention that SF 956 will be heard in the Senate Environment Committee this week.

The MCOA has read and reviewed SF 956 and the proposed language changes. These changes carry significant ramifications and impacts to both the authority of Conservation Officers and the ability to effectively protect Minnesota's Natural Resources. Conservation Officers through enforcing Minnesota Statutes and Rules, and the DNR Commissioner's direction, are the chosen personnel put in place to do the job. SF 956 significantly changes the ability to effectively protect Minnesota's natural resources when resources are being abused.

The authority of Conservation Officers is not taken lightly. Each Conservation Officer is taught and trained to work within the legal limits of their authority.

Every Conservation Officer swears an oath:

I, _____, do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States and of the State of Minnesota, and honestly, faithfully, and impartially discharge all the duties of a Conservation Officer:

To obey and enforce the law without fear, favor, or discrimination:

To conduct myself at all times in accordance with the highest moral and professional standards and ethics:

All this I do solemnly swear to the best of my knowledge and ability, so help me God.

This oath is taken and carried with pride and dignity by our members. The Minnesota Constitution not only requires us to protect the people of Minnesota but also requires us to protect and be the voice for the natural resources of Minnesota within the boundaries of the statutes and rules set by the Minnesota Legislature since the inception of the Conservation Officer in 1887. A change of this magnitude to the Conservation Officer authority would gut the intent of the existing statutes and rules in place to do the job of protecting Minnesota's natural resources and people. This bill is contrary to Minnesota Constitution Article 13 Section 12, which provides a Constitutional mandate that provides the following, "hunting and fishing and the taking of game and fish are a valued part of our heritage that shall be forever preserved for the people and shall be managed by law and regulation for the public good." This Constitutional amendment was put into place by the people of Minnesota to protect their natural resources.

The Minnesota Conservation Officers Association is opposed to bill SF 956.

Respectfully submitted,

Joe Stattelman
President of the Minnesota Conservation Officers Association