



John P. Lenczewski, Executive Director
Minnesota Trout Unlimited
PO Box 845
Chanhassen, MN 55317
612.670.1629
John.lenczewski@mntu.org

April 30, 2025

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

I'm writing on behalf of Minnesota Trout Unlimited to urge that the Committee **remove the provision in SF 2781 (Art. 1, Sec. 15) that repeals the clarification of public waters adopted by the Minnesota Legislature in 2024**. The provision would make which waterways are protected under state law less clear, while the language adopted last year reinforces the DNR's and Court's interpretation and affirms that it is the statutory definition that defines the scope of the State's jurisdiction over public waters.

We are especially concerned about this rollback of clarifying language because:

- In Minnesota, "public waters" are legally entitled to stronger environmental protections. including buffer zones, permitting requirements for impacts, and restrictions on harmful activities like pollutant discharges or channel alterations.
- If a trout stream or spring creek isn't clearly classified as a public water, it can be much easier for it to be degraded, diverted, filled, or polluted without regulatory oversight.
- Many trout streams and groundwater-fed springs are relatively small or remote, making them easy to overlook unless they are clearly mapped and defined as public waters.
- Trout require cold, clean, connected water. Losing even small feeder streams or springs to pollution or alteration can destroy an entire fishery.
- A clear, inclusive definition closes loopholes and ensures enforcement agencies like the Minnesota DNR and MPCA can act before damage is done.
- Legal clarity about what waters are "public" is a foundational tool without it, restoration projects, protection efforts, and enforcement actions are all undermined.

On behalf of our members, and more than 100,000 trout anglers, we urge you to remove this provision. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

John. P. Lenczewski