



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

Executive Summary for Action

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers Meeting
Wednesday, September 16, 2020

Agenda Item

Item 6. F. - 2020 Legislative Action

Prepared By

Linda Loomis, Administrator

Summary

At the August Board of Managers meeting the Board was presented with a joint letter to the Governor and legislative leaders urging them to pass a bonding bill. The Board opted to send its own letter and not sign on to the joint letter. Because of miscommunication the LMRWD's name ended up on the joint letter. That has been corrected and the District' name has been removed from letter and on electronic media. A letter from the LMRWD was drafted with input from the Board and sent to the Governor and legislative leaders on Wednesday, September 9th. A copy of the letter is attached.

A fourth special session was called Friday, September 11, 2020.

Attachments

Letter to Governor Walz and legislative leaders dated September 9, 2020

Recommended Action

No recommended action

September 9, 2020



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER
WATERSHED DISTRICT

Carver

Lauren Salvato

Dakota

Vacant

Hennepin

David Raby
Secretary/Treasurer

Adam Frey
Vice President

Scott

Jesse Hartmann
President

Governor Tim Walz
130 State Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155

Speaker Melissa Hortman
463 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Kurt Daudt
House Minority Leader
267 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Mary Murphy
Chair Capital Investment Committee
343 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka
3113 Senate Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senate Minority Leader Susan Kent
2227 Senate Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator David Senjem
Chair Capital Investment Committee
3401 Senate Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Walz and Legislative Leaders:

The Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD) supports the passage of a strong bonding bill in 2020. Passage of a bonding package will provide much needed public infrastructure in Minnesota. Minnesota has lagged in funding public infrastructure over the past decade. In the last several years, legislative sessions have ended with either the passage of a bonding bill that did not meet the needs of the state or no bonding bill at all.

Within the LMRWD is a 15-mile long, 9 foot deep navigation channel that supports commerce which is critical to Minnesota's economy. The LMRWD is responsible, with the US Army Corps of Engineers, for maintaining the Navigation Channel to enable barges to move imports and exports through Minnesota, across the United States and globally. Every biennium the LMRWD has sought funds from the state to assist with managing dredge material resulting from maintenance of the channel. If the amount of sediment reaching the Lower Minnesota River could be reduced, the need for dredging could also be reduced.

Reducing the flow of water is a key strategy to reducing the transport of sediment that results from excessive flows. A bill introduced this year would allow for projects that would retain water (impoundment) to help reduce the flow of water in the Minnesota River during heavy rains or extreme snow melts. Providing funds for impoundments will not only alleviate flooding but will help to reduce the transport of sediment downstream by storing water on the land to slow the flow that reaches waterways and allow for infiltration.

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LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER
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Construction projects that manage the flow of water from the land would also reduce the need for flood hazard mitigation, such as that being considered for the City of Henderson. Funding of flood hazard mitigation through a bonding bill will provide much needed relief for Henderson, help store flood waters and minimize the impact of flooding through the channel.

The LMRWD urges the Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign a bonding bill that will begin to catch up with the needs for public infrastructure across the state. Flood hazard mitigation and increased efforts to manage water flows should also be supported and will allow the LMRWD to become less reliant on the state to help maintain the channel which is so crucial to commerce.

I'm happy to answer any questions you may have or provide additional detail.

Linda Loomis
Administrator,
Lower Minnesota River Watershed District