



# LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

## Executive Summary for Action

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers Meeting

Wednesday, December 15, 2021

### Agenda Item

#### Item 5. A. – Special Agenda Item

#### Prepared By

Linda Loomis, Administrator

#### Summary

The Board invited Representative Paul Torkelson to the Board meeting to discuss items of concern to the District. Representative will join the meeting virtually. The Board discussed some issues at previous board meetings that they wanted to bring up with Representative Torkelson. One item was the idea of combining watershed districts and soil & water conservation districts. A report was prepared in 2007 by the office of the State Auditor that looked at the complexities of water management in the State of Minnesota. While some things have changed since the report was prepared much has not. I believe those advocating for combining SWCDs and watershed districts are simply trying to simplify the management of waters in the state. A link to the report is attached below.

The second issue concerns the Water Storage Initiative that was passed by the legislature in 2021 and the use of the \$2 million that was appropriated. There needs to be additional funding from the state and funds should be spent implementing projects, not more study or capacity building.

At the MAWD conference there was a lot of discussion about the use of funds from the Clean Water Legacy program. The concerns of the MAWD members in attendance for the business meeting was that CWF were being used for capacity building for SWCDs. This came up in the discussion of one of the resolutions proposed. The consensus of the membership present was that MAWD adopt the resolution that CWF not be used for capacity building of any level of government.

Lastly, an update provided by the MAWD Executive Director stated that MAWD had signed on to support federal legislation – the Mississippi River Restoration and Resilience Initiative. It was reported that this legislation would organize the Mississippi River Water Management Organization like the Red River Basin Commission. This may be a topic that we want to discuss with Representative Torkelson. I have included a link below to the federal bill.

#### Attachments

[OLA – Evaluation Report: Watershed Management](#)  
[Mississippi River Restoration and Resilience Initiative](#)

#### Recommended Action

No action recommended