



# LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

## Executive Summary for Action

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers Meeting

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

### Agenda Item

**Item 5. F. - Letter of Support for the Minnesota River Crossing and Flood Resiliency Study in the Southwestern Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area**

### Prepared By

Linda Loomis, Administrator

### Summary

Scott County Transportation Department, working in partnership with Carver County, is planning to pursue funding through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity grant program for the “Minnesota River Crossing and Flood Resiliency Study”. The proposed planning study will identify a community-supported solution that addresses infrastructure improvement needs due to frequent flooding at key river crossings, including TH 25, Scott CSAH 9, and TH 41.

It is important that the LMRWD support this effort, not only because Scott and Carver counties are LMRWD partners, but this outcomes will have an impact on the LMRWD and it is important to be a part of the planning process.

As part of the grant submittal, Scott County is asking for LMRWD support. A draft letter of support was provided, which the LMRWD has revised. Since Scott County is a partner of the LMRWD and the deadline for the grant submittal was Tuesday, February 20, 2024, before the February LMRWD Board of Managers meeting, a letter of support was provided to Scott County.

A copy of the letter of support is attached, for the Board’s information.

### Attachments

Letter of support for the Minnesota River Crossing and Flood Resiliency Study on the Southwestern Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area

### Recommended Action

Motion to authorize execution and distribution of letter of support for the Minnesota River Crossing and Flood Resiliency Study on the Southwestern Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area after the fact



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER  
WATERSHED DISTRICT

### Carver

Lauren Salvato  
Secretary

### Dakota

Theresa Kuplic  
Vice President

### Hennepin

Joseph Barisonzi  
President

Laura Amundson  
Treasurer

### Scott

Nathan Dull

Linda Loomis, Administrator  
Home/Office: (763) 545-4659  
Cell: (763) 568-9522

112 East 5th Street  
Suite 102  
Chaska, MN 55318

E-mail:  
admin@lowermnriverwd.org

February 20, 2024

Mr. Pete Buttigieg  
Secretary, US Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

### **RE: Support of the Minnesota River Crossing and Flood Resiliency Study in the Southwestern Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area**

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD), I am writing to express our support for Scott County's 2024 funding request from the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant program. If awarded, the county will use the funding for the Minnesota River Crossing and Flood Resiliency Study.

At LMRWD, we work with communities within the watershed district and adjacent to its boundaries to protect, improve, and educate residents, business owners, stakeholders, and the public about rare and high-value resources. The LMRWD's unique resources include trout lakes and streams, calcareous fens, bluffs protected to minimize erosion and loss of property, and the Minnesota River, which provides recreational and commercial navigation opportunities. Our 80-square-mile boundary includes the Minnesota River Valley from the city of Carver, Minnesota, at the west to the confluence with the Mississippi River near historic Fort Snelling and the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, at the east.

One challenge facing the Minnesota River and its major tributaries is the wide fluctuations in peak water flows, exacerbated by upstream land uses and increasingly frequent heavy rain events. Increased peak flows lead to greater bank instability and erosion, consequently reduced water quality due to higher levels of sediment and nutrients. Higher levels of sediment and nutrients increase the need for dredging to maintain river navigation, crucial to the economy of the region and state of Minnesota. Increased dredging creates additional expenses both in the cost to dredge and to the cost to manage dredge materials once removed from the navigation channel.

The changing climate and associated heavy rains increase flooding which in turn affects the people who live, work, and play in our region. This includes those who rely on a safe and efficient transportation system to access employment, healthcare, recreation, and other destinations. Increased extreme flood events impact river crossings, which have become inadequate and must be closed to ensure the safety of the public.

We support Scott County leading this study to identify a community-supported vision for necessary investments that preserve and protect the Minnesota River Watershed and ensure reliable access at key Minnesota River crossings during flooding events. This includes an analysis of Trunk Highway (TH) 41, Carver CSAH 11/Scott CSAH 9, and TH 25, which are most at risk for flood-related closures. The analysis also would include

CSAH 101 and U.S. Highway 169, which both take on additional traffic during flooding events, causing a major imbalance on the transportation system, resulting in extreme levels of congestion and crashes.

I am writing to ask for your support in this crucial study to help us identify a solution to this ongoing issue that will only worsen due to our changing climate. Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity for me to voice my support for this important study that will benefit the Minnesota River and river valley communities in the southwestern Twin Cities metro area.

Sincerely,

Joseph Barisonzi  
Board President  
Lower Minnesota River Watershed District