



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

Executive Summary for Action

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers Meeting

Wednesday, April 18, 2018

Agenda Item

Item 7. E. - 2018 Legislative Action

Prepared By

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Summary

A summary of legislation Lisa Frenette is following on behalf of the LMRWD is attached. We also spent Thursday April 12th visiting legislators at the Capitol. We met with Representatives Fabian, Torkelson and Paul Anderson. We also met with Senator Weber. We are planning to visit with additional legislators on April 25th. Our message has been to thank them for the funding last session and give them an update on how we are using the money. We are also letting them know that we are still interested in managing flows in the upper basin of the Minnesota River and what we are doing in our area to better manage flow and sediment production. Also that we are looking for a longer term solution to funding the management of material dredged from the river.

We discuss with them how important funding the implementation of One Watershed One Plans (1W1P) are to the LMRWD and how difficult it is for the MN River Basin 1W1P to be funded locally. We have asked them to let us know if there is anything that we can do to help them reach the goals of the 1W1Ps.

Lastly, Kim Musser of the Minnesota River Basin Data Center reached out to me. They are seeking an LCCMR grant to fund the Center. We agreed that we should do more to work with each other since the Center is the repository for a lot of information, historical and scientific, on the Minnesota River. We agreed to keep each other informed of what we are working on and look for ways to support the work each of us is doing. The Board may want to consider adding state funding of the Center as a legislative priority.

Attachments

Legislative update

Recommended Action

No action recommended

LMRWD Legislative Update

The House and the Senate wrapped up their expedited policy deadlines on Thursday, March 30th. The February 20th start date and the marathon to finish up work before the deadlines did not allow for a lot of opportunity to have some legislation heard but that may be a good thing...

The following pieces made it through the mandatory policy deadlines but as with all legislation nothing is dead or alive until adjournment of the legislature on the third Monday in May.

Drainage Workgroup Legislation - SF 3410/HF 3836

This bill originally set out to be about consensus items of the DWG but has morphed into a source of contention. At the source of contention is language allowing municipalities that may need septic systems to access AGBMP loans to a lack of understanding of what the bill specifically sets out to do on run-off and sediment delivery options on public ditch drainage efforts advanced by the DWG. MAWD is working with legislators to find common agreement on AGBMP loans and runoff and sediment options.

Nutrient Reduction Strategy Funding - SF 3620/HF 3940

\$750,000 has been requested to assistant MN State University Water Resource Center to convene a stakeholder group to design a comprehensive strategy for point and nonpoint source pollution in the Minnesota River Basin. The stakeholder group must review local water management plans, review current practice and science related to point-to-point and point-to-nonpoint trading, identify any obstacles to trading in the Minnesota River basin, and recommend appropriate actions to enhance trading opportunities to improve water quality in the Minnesota River basin, including but not limited to developing appropriate trading ratios and creating a trading exchange. Watershed districts have not been included as part of the stakeholder group to date.

Nitrogen Sulfate Rulemaking

The LMRWD has been closely monitoring the Governor's proposal to prohibit the application of nitrates on farmland in an effort to reduce these chemicals for groundwater protection. To date, the rules do affect communities in the Minnesota River Basin.

Various agriculture groups have proposed legislation that will prohibit any rulemaking on this chemical. They include MN Corn Growers, AgriGrowth Council, the Egg Producers, and MN Sugarbeet Growers Association among others who are concerned that it will have a negative impact on crop yields.

Environmental Science Review - SF 2878/HF 3065

This bill appropriates \$1 million in 2018 and 2019 to the MN Environmental Science and Economic Review Board to review the scientific valid and technical accuracy of water quality standards, TMDL's, WRAP's and NPDES permits that have new or more restrictive effluent-limits outside the metro area. This legislation is an off-shoot of a legislative/rulemaking issue when the MPCA designated new rules for waste-water treatment facilities and discharges into local lakes, rivers and streams and for groundwater protection.

Legislative Approval Required for Water Pollution Fees - SF 2637/HF 2940

These bills stem from recent increases by the MPCA on water quality fees. Comments in committee hearings range from new rules increasing water quality fees to homeowners not being able to afford the increases. The legislation is awaiting final action in both the House and the Senate.