



LOWER MINNESOTA RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

Executive Summary for Action

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Board of Managers Meeting

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

Agenda Item

Item 7. A. – 2025 Legislative Agenda

Prepared By

Linda Loomis, Administrator

Summary

On December 11, 2024, the Board met with its Government Relations Consultant, Park Street Public. During the meeting, the Board shared their desired legislative agenda with Joe Birkholz and Molly Jansen. Subsequently, Mr. Birkholz and Ms. Jansen prepared a formal document outlining the 2025 legislative goals for the Board to review and approve, which is attached.

Mr. Birkholz and/or Ms. Jansen will virtually join the January Board meeting to answer any questions the Board may have.

Attachments

2025 LMRWD Legislative Agenda

Recommended Action

Motion to approve 2025 LMRWD Legislative Agenda

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District

Legislative Agenda

- **Base Funding:** Maintain base appropriation of \$240,000 per year for cost of operating and maintaining dredge spoil sites.

Background: The Minnesota River 9-foot navigation channel contributes significantly to regional and statewide economies. For this reason, the Board of Managers of the LMRWD maintain that the State of Minnesota should continue to share in the cost of managing the material dredged from the River in order to maintain the channel.

- **Bonding:** Protect 2023 \$2.75 million capital investment appropriation

Background: In the 2023 legislative session, \$2.75 million was appropriated to the LMRWD for final design and construction of capital improvements that are necessary to stabilize the riverbank, prevent erosion, and prevent future degradation of the Minnesota River in Eden Prairie.

- **Water Storage:** Protect 2023 Investments

Background: In 2023, the Legislature appropriated \$17 million for water quality and storage in the Minnesota River Basin. The purpose of the program is to protect infrastructure, improve water quality, and mitigate climate impacts. BWSR has been able to use this appropriation to leverage \$21 million in federal funds. This program and funding is critical for water quality, erosion control, and climate mitigation in the Minnesota River Basin and should be protected.

Items to Monitor/Support

- Voluntary Certification with Limited Liability for Commercial Winter Maintenance Applicators and other legislation to reduce salt entering the natural environment
- State policy and legislation around Calcareous Fens
- Monitor legislation coming out of the Drainage Work Group and other drainage policy/programs
- DNR and drainage conversation
- Support actions to control the movement of invasive carp species and implementation of 2024 LSOHC funding for an invasive carp control structure at Lock and Dam 5 on the Mississippi River.

