SF4304 Outdoor heritage fund Appropriation and prior appropriations extension and modification

Testimony Opposing Funding for the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project

Good Afternoon Chairman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Monica Dohmen, and I have been closely observing the actions of the Roseau River Watershed District since before 2014. I am writing to respectfully request that you withhold funding for the Roseau River Watershed District until ongoing legal and procedural concerns are resolved.

1 Active Litigation and Eminent Domain Concerns - The Watershed District is currently involved in a lawsuit. The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council does not fund projects involving eminent domain, yet this project functions as a de facto form of it. Multiple licensed hydrologists in Minnesota have reviewed the projects and concluded that it will not reduce flooding as residents were originally promised. For many landowners, the resulting impacts could effectively force them off their family farms.

2 Lack of Meaningful Citizen Participation Opportunities for public involvement have been minimal. For example, several citizens volunteered to serve on the operations committee for the Roseau Lake Project and were told by a DNR representative that they would receive a draft operations document for review. Two weeks later, the DNR representative stated he had decided not to share it. The draft was then presented and approved at a meeting before the operations committee members had even met.

3 Concerns About Transparency and Public Process Transparency has always been inconsistent. The Watershed District routinely provides incomplete information and then uses meeting attendance to claim public support, even when attendees do not agree. If some have clearly voiced their disagreement, it is reported as minimized or dismissed as insignificant. Given these issues and many more, I respectfully ask that funding for this project be paused until the current lawsuit is resolved in court. Only then can a fully informed and responsible decision be made.

Thank you for your consideration.

Monica Dohmen

Roseau, MN