MINNESOTA WATERSHEDS
Connecting People. Protecting Water.

Red River Watershed Management Board

March 16, 2026

Senator Foung Hawj
Assistant Majority Leader
Chair, Minnesota Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee
Capitol Office
95 University Avenue W.
Minnesota Senate Bldg., Room 3231
St. Paul, MN 55155

Minnesota Watersheds represents 41 watershed districts throughout Minnesota. The Red River Water Management Board (RRWMB) represents seven watershed districts in Northwest Minnesota. Minnesota Watersheds and the RRWMB have been actively involved in the Minnesota BWSR Wetlands Advisory Committee. Our organizations have provided comments on draft Rules as well as proposed amendment language to sections of the Wetland Conservation Act (WCA). On behalf of the Minnesota Watersheds and the RRWMB, we would like to express support for the amendment language (attached) for MN Statutes Section 103G.2241 Subdivisions 1 and 2.

These changes are important because they provide a defensible, reproducible, and practical way of determining whether wetlands in agricultural fields should or should not be regulated. We believe the proposed change to Subdivision 1 will provide landowners and WCA Local Governmental Units (LGUs) with a method to document agricultural use and the applicability of agricultural exemptions, regardless of landowner participation in the federal farm program. Recent rule changes have created hardships for LGUs and landowners due to the absence of federal USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service certified wetland determinations in many areas of Minnesota.

We believe the proposed change to Subdivision 2 will provide drainage authorities and WCA LGUs with workable regulatory guidance to manage repairs of public drainage systems consistent with drainage law and the WCA. These changes will help streamline the regulatory process for drainage system repairs by making decisions black and white for WCA Administrators, while allowing regulatory protection for wetland areas adjacent to historic drainage systems no longer being actively managed for drainage. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jan Voit
Executive Director
Minnesota Watersheds

Sincerely,

Robert L. Sip
Executive Director
RRWMB