SF4304 Outdoor Heritage Fund: Appropriation and Prior Appropriations Extension and Modification

Testimony Opposing Funding for the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation Project

Dear Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Good afternoon. I am Vangie Byfuglien, resident of Roseau and I am requesting that funding for the Roseau River Watershed District be halted. The community is very concerned with projects that are not maintained. In fact, there are many projects the District has undertaken where the community has registered concerns with the lack of maintenance that affects farming and crop production.

With regard to the Roseau Lake Rehabilitation project and the Roseau River restoration project, a federal lawsuit involving about 100 landowners and over 12,600 acres of private farmland, peoples homes, barns, quonsets, and other buildings are at risk. The lawsuit alleges multiple constitutional violations, including eminent domain abuse of local landowners and my family are affected by this.

Expert hydrologists have found the project will not reduce flooding as promised, which could displace farming families and harm local economies. The District has not properly identified private lands within the project area, leading to underestimated costs and concealing true impacts—an issue central to the federal case. Historical land improvements and investments have also been ignored, misrepresenting property values and project effects.

Meaningful public participation has been lacking; promised documents were withheld and meetings proceeded without proper engagement. The District has provided incomplete information and has already begun construction despite ongoing objections and legal counsel involvement.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to pause funding until legal and procedural matters are resolved. Our landowner group, coalition, and legal team are available for further discussion.

Thank you.

Vangie Byfuglien

Roseau MN