

February 2, 2011

The Honorable Mark Dayton
Governor, State of Minnesota
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155-1606

Speaker Kurt Zellers
Minnesota House of Representatives
463 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155-1206

Senator Amy Koch
Majority Leader, Minnesota Senate
208 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155-1606

Representative Matt Dean
Majority Leader, Minnesota House
459 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155 -1206

Senator Tom Bakk
Minority Leader, Minnesota Senate
147 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155-1206

Representative Paul Thissen
Minority Leader, Minnesota House
267 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155-1206

Dear Governor Dayton and Legislative Leaders:

As we begin the 2011 Minnesota legislative session, facing continuing state budget challenges, we must remember the strong public will of the 1.6 million voters who voted to pass the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment in 2008. Today, voter support for the Amendment remains steadfast.

We appreciate those of you who supported the Amendment during your elected careers and your recent 2010 campaigns. In recognition of your new leadership positions – representing many new faces in state government – we stand united in calling upon you and all Minnesota government officials to uphold the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment.

We, the undersigned organizations representing a broad cross-section of Minnesotans who deeply value our Great Outdoors; land and habitat; and lakes, rivers and streams, ask you to keep the faith with the voters of Minnesota who overwhelmingly passed the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Constitutional Amendment.

In particular, we draw your attention to the requirements contained in Article XI, Section 15 of the Minnesota Constitution stating in part: *“money under this section must supplement traditional sources of funding for these purposes and may not be used as a substitute.”*

We ask you to follow the three principles, stated below, to determine if your budget proposals adhere to the Minnesota Constitution:

1. *Minnesota's Great Outdoors must maintain its traditional share of the total state general fund budget and not dip below its already small one percent proportion – a 30-year low. Any general fund cuts proposed for environmental and conservation programs must not result in a percentage reduction in these programs that is greater than any percentage reduction in total general fund spending.*
2. *Statutorily dedicated funds already in existence for Minnesota's Great Outdoors cannot be raided to pay for other budget items.*
3. *Capital investments for Minnesota's Great Outdoors must be maintained at a level at least equal to the traditional 10-year average of 22.2 percent of the total general fund obligation bonding authority.*

SUPPORT REMAINS STRONG FOR AMENDMENT FUNDING

Even in today's difficult economic times, Minnesotans continue to highly value our lakes, rivers and streams and Minnesota's Great Outdoors. In a statewide poll conducted for the Minnesota Environmental Partnership in November 2010 by a bipartisan national polling team, two-thirds of voters agreed with the statement that *"In these tough economic times, elected officials must be reminded that we want to protect Minnesota's Great Outdoors for the long-term. We must not let elected officials raid constitutionally dedicated conservation funds to solve short-term state budget problems."*

The members of this broad coalition welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your staffs to further discuss these principles for keeping true to the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Constitutional Amendment in relation to your 2011 budget and bonding recommendations. Please contact Gary Botzek, government relations associate for the Minnesota Environmental Partnership, at gary@capitolconnections.com or 651-283-4511 to coordinate a meeting with representatives of the coalition.

Thank you for your commitment to honoring the public mandate to safeguard the investment the voters have made in our Great Outdoors. We look forward to meeting with you as we work together to protect Minnesota's future.

Sincerely,

Sally Wakefield
Executive Director
1000 Friends of Minnesota

Sean Gosiewski
Program Director
Alliance for Sustainability

Lance Ness
President
Anglers for Habitat

Kit Healy
Conservation Chair
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis

Mark Peterson
Executive Director
Audubon Minnesota

David Lien
Co-Chair, Minnesota
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

John Peck
Bluffland Whitetails Association

Steve Hobbs
Executive Director
Belwin Conservancy

Jim Fitzpatrick
Executive Director
Carpenter/St. Croix Valley Nature Center

William E. "Bill" Faber, Ph.D., CWB
Natural Resources Instructor
Central Lakes College Natural Resources
Club

Patrick Moore
Executive Director
Clean Up The River Environment

Deanna White
State Director
Clean Water Action Alliance of MN

Paul Austin
Executive Director
Conservation Minnesota

Ryan Heiniger
Director of Conservation Programs
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.

Ken Bradley
Director
Environment Minnesota

Lance Ness
President
Fish and Wildlife Legislative Alliance

Michael Noble
Executive Director
Fresh Energy

Joan Nephew
Executive Director
Freshwater Society

Paul Danicic
Executive Director
Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness

Kristin Larsen
Executive Director
Friends of the Cloquet Valley State Forest

Peggy Lynch
Executive Director
Friends of the Parks & Trails of St. Paul and
Ramsey County

Whitney Clark
Executive Director
Friends of the Mississippi River

Marc Huginin
Executive Director
Friends of Washington County

Christina Mills
Policy Analyst/Staff Scientist
Institute for Energy and Environmental
Research

David Morris
Vice President
Institute for Local Self-Reliance

Nancy Lange
Interim Executive Director
Izaak Walton League -Midwest Office

Curt Leitz
President
Izaak Walton League, MN Division

Michael McKay
Executive Director
Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance

George Boody
Executive Director
Land Stewardship Project

Laura Wang
Interim Executive Director
League of Women Voters of Minnesota
Education Fund

Paula West
Executive Director
Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation

Jeff Brand
President
Mankato Area Environmentalists

Ray Valley
President
Minnesota Association of Conservation
Professionals

Scott Strand
Executive Director
Minnesota Center for Environmental
Advocacy

Gary Botzek
Executive Director
Minnesota Conservation Federation

Mark Wm. Johnson
Executive Director
Minnesota Deer Hunters Association

Steve Morse
Executive Director
Minnesota Environmental Partnership

Glen Hill
Executive Director
Minnesota Food Association

Dr. Melinda Erickson
President
Minnesota Ground Water Association

Kris William Larson
Executive Director
Minnesota Land Trust

Tom Bell
Representative
Minnesota Ornithologists' Union

Brian Winter
President
Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society

Joshua Winters
Executive Director
Minnesota Public Interest Research Group

Laura Cina
Managing Director
Minnesota Renewable Energy Society

Terry Houle
President
Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter

John Lenczewski
Executive Director
Minnesota Trout Unlimited

Brad Nylin
Executive Director
Minnesota Waterfowl Association

Marian Bender
Executive Director
Minnesota Waters

Sharon Angell Magliulo
Board Chair
Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness

Garry Leaf
Executive Director
Sportsmen for Change

Brett Feldman
Executive Director
Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota

E. Frances Sauer
President
Southeastern Minnesotans for
Environmental Protection

Paula Westmoreland
Executive Director
Permaculture Research Institute Cold
Climate

Tom Duffus
Upper Midwest Director
The Conservation Fund

Matt Holland
Senior Field Coordinator
Pheasants Forever

Peggy Ladner
Director
The Nature Conservancy

Jan Joannides
Executive Director
Renewing the Countryside

Fred L. Froehlich
Honorary Director
The Nicollet Conservation Club, Inc.

Deb Ryun
Executive Director
Saint Croix River Association

Susan Schmidt
Director, MN Office
The Trust for Public Land

Susan Solterman
Saint Paul Audubon Society

Cory MacNulty
Executive Director
Voyageurs National Park Association

LeRoger Lind
President
Save Lake Superior Association

Nicole Rom
Executive Director
Will Steger Foundation

Margret Levin
State Director
Sierra Club -North Star Chapter

Lisa Daniels
Executive Director
Windustry

Poll results from a statewide telephone poll of 701 registered Minnesota voters, conducted Nov. 16-21, 2010, for the Minnesota Environmental Partnership by the bipartisan research team of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (D) and Public Opinion Strategies (R). The margin of sampling error for the full statewide samples is 3.7 percentage points, plus or minus, at a 95 percent confidence level

cc: Minnesota Representatives and Senators