

MCEA Presentation to Legislative Water Commission Meeting, October 17, 2017

- Minnesota must address water quality problems in surface waters to protect public health, recreation, ecosystems, and economies.
  - Water quality issues persist statewide, especially in the Minnesota River and Mississippi watershed; and
  - Completion of TMDLs and WRAPS increases pressure on cities to upgrade WWT.
- The big wastewater treatment problem is a crumbling water infrastructure system.
  - Federal grants no longer available, and WWT costs have increased;
  - Lack of planning is sometimes a factor; and
  - Cities may lack tax base to support debt service for WWT loans.
- Communities need to be able to effectively and affordably meet their water quality responsibilities.
  - Additional state bonding funds can help;
  - A new state water restoration fund, funded by a user fee, should be considered; this was very successful in the Chesapeake Bay region in addressing municipal, stormwater and agricultural runoff pollution.
- Raiding other funds for WWT costs is unwise:
  - the Clean Water Fund and lottery fund are too small to make a significant difference;
  - Clean Water Fund is needed for nonpoint source reduction and other purposes; and
  - Lottery funds set aside for the environment are needed for vital water and natural resources work, including innovations in wastewater treatment technology.
- Fairness questions must be addressed:
  - How to reduce the pollution on the front end to decrease the cost to cities?
  - Are cities paying too much?
  - What is the best way to reach a solution to wastewater treatment cost issues in combination with efforts to revitalize rural Minnesota?
- Creative holistic solutions are needed, to meet infrastructure needs no longer supported by federal grants. All stakeholders should join in finding good solutions that combine:
  - The goal of clean water;
  - Affordability to citizens;
  - Revitalization of Minnesota communities; and
  - Long-term sustainability.

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