Legislative Water Commission- 2019 Legislative Ranked Recommendations:

Groundwater for Minnesota's Future

Legislative Recommendations: Groundwater—2019- Ranked by Stakeholder

1) **Groundwater Recharge and Re-Use:** Allow managed recharge. Protect areas where enhanced recharge makes hydrologic sense. Assess and allow water reuse where appropriate. (100)
2) **Data, Information and Analysis:** Maintain and enhance water information and monitoring programs. Continue and accelerate the County Geologic Atlas Program. Increase emphasis on collecting information to understand groundwater and surface water interactions. Prepare a strategy for generating and managing information needed to integrate water-sustainability assessment results into regulatory programs on a statewide basis. Support systematic water sustainability assessments by re-assessing data programs in order to collect data that are needed. (90)
3) **Support programs that identify and protect vulnerable aquifers that are important sources of water to private drinking water wells**. (90)
4) **Water Bank Accounts:** Incorporate robust water- budget information into water planning. Improve understanding of statewide water balances (bank account) and water sustainability by enhancing the one watershed/one plan program. Use existing information about groundwater recharge, streamflow, and water use to identify priority for sustainability implementation, based on objective criteria. Use this analysis to assess priority areas for future groundwater management area programs. (80)
5) **Groundwater Analysis and Modeling:** Increase efforts to construct and apply groundwater models, like the Metro Model, to assess regional groundwater availability and sustainability. Incorporate groundwater modeling into watershed planning in areas of groundwater concern. Enhance and expand the DNR's groundwater management program. (80)
6) **Groundwater/Surface Water Interactions:** Develop programs to better integrate groundwater/surface water interactions into rule. Increase programs to collect information to understand groundwater and surface water interactions. (80)
7) **Enhance the Water Appropriation Process:** Develop an automated water-appropriation tool that assesses streamflow deletion based on the cumulative effects of groundwater pumping. Simplify the appropriation-permit process for small appropriators. Assess pumping volumes relative to watershed size, median streamflow and stream thermal regime. Expand DNR's authority to designate water-resources management areas. Expand DNR's authority to adjust appropriations when needed. (70)
8) **Economic Analyses:** Assess costs and benefits of ensuring water sustainability. Quantify the economic value of ecosystem services provided by adequately managed streams and lakes. Assess problems and cost associated with of aging infrastructure and leaking water system. (70)
9) **Enhance our Understanding of Connections between Hydrology and Aquatic Biology**: Increase programs to understand the interrelationships between hydrology and aquatic ecology as well as the associated eco-services. Continue to develop criteria for assessing the critical water levels or flow conditions required to support ecosystems. Include in these analyses habitat- and population-based minimum flow, high flow protection standards for habitat-forming and silt-flushing high flows, protections for downstream needs, and protection for natural variability of flows over time (hydrograph shape). (70)
10) **Importance of Sustainable Water**: Dedicate a portion of Clean Water Funds for water sustainably efforts. (70)
11) Legislation: Propose legislation to limit overuse of chloride de-icing chemicals on public and commercial parking logs and sidewalks (60)
12) Suggested: Consolidate GW regulations among agencies (60)
13) Inter-jurisdictional water planning: Support and encourage processes such as the Metropolitan Council's regional planning and coordination process and the DNR's groundwater-management area process. Use that process to explore options for conjunctive use and water(50)
14) Establish a Clean Water Council "Sustainability Committee" (50)
15) Legislation: Implement aspects of the groundwater protection act to eliminate over-use of nitrate fertilizer (40)