

**Legislative Water Commission- 2019 Legislative Recommendations:**  
**Drinking Water- Ranked**  
**DRAFT, for Discussion only, JRS**

*Minnesota's water aquifers and rivers provide drinking water to millions of people. Residents rely on these systems for public health and environmental, recreational, and economic benefits. To sustain Minnesota's future, we need to manage the state's water resources wisely to protect and enhance their value, including maintaining and enhancing the viability of our drinking-water systems. Following are priority recommendations for protecting our drinking water. These recommendations represent a consensus built on published documents as well as input from stakeholders, agency staff and Legislative Water Commission Members. The recommendations have not been endorsed the LWC at this time and are for discussion purposes only.*

- 1) **Improve monitoring, public information and education, and the mitigation** of contaminants in drinking water. Monitor and understand risks to private wells from land use activities and naturally occurring contaminants, and prepare strategies to reduce risks. Continue to support the County Geologic Atlas Program and add a water-budget analysis to the program. (120)
- 2) **Increase investments in public-drinking water infrastructure** to meet treatment needs and repair and replace aging water mains and other facilities. Conduct an assessment of current infrastructure needs. Provide additional financial assistance to communities in need of replacing aging infrastructure. (110)
- 3) Continue to support, and increase support for **source-water protection** for groundwater. Initiate a source-water program for surface waters that are a source of drinking water. Prepare and implement emergency preparedness plans to respond to spills, storms, harmful algal blooms, and other disruptions. (90)
- 4) **Increase the MDH drinking water hook-up fee.** Provide funding to complete condition assessments and the development of asset management plans for drinking water supply systems (90)
- 5) *Expand comprehensive real-time surface and groundwater **monitoring to detect potential threats** to water supplies, develop early responses, and provide public reporting. (80)*
- 6) *Minnesota's water-related infrastructure is aging. Provide local governments and water utilities tools to inventory, assess, and strategically invest in water assets. **Compile and evaluate asset management plans** as part of a drinking water asset management plan. Identify and prioritize infrastructure elements with risks to public health, such as lead service line replacement. Identify and prioritize areas for targeted infrastructure replacement or upgrades. (80)*
- 7) **Implement the groundwater protection rule** to protect private drinking water wells. (80)
- 8) **Embrace new Technology:** *Much of the infrastructure for drinking water was built between 50 and 100 years ago and utilizes outdated technology and approaches for treatment, distribution, and collection. Encourage ideas, partnerships, and cost-effective emerging technologies and materials that hold promise for more efficient water and energy use, recovery of resources (such as nutrients), and improvement of environmental and public health outcomes. Support innovation through partnerships and funding with universities to expand research programs in the drinking water. Support new and emerging cost-effective technologies (such as smart metering and loss management technology) through permitting requirements that integrate water utilities with innovative communication and energy networks. (80)*
- 9) Identify the location and condition of Minnesota's failing septic systems, sewers and storm-water infrastructure because they contaminate groundwater. It is estimated that many of Minnesota's million septic systems are failing but we do not have good information on that issue. Establish a uniform standard for septic system performance, inspections, or periodic maintenance (70)
- 10) Pass legislation that allows local governments to adopt ordinances requiring homes and businesses to connect to community drinking-water systems when onsite wells fail. Strengthen permitting requirements to allow community systems only where a municipal system connection is not available, cost effective, or environmentally necessary. Community systems should be adaptable to future increases in the number of users, demonstrate a financially supported asset management plan, and provide for eventual connection to a municipal system. Increase the financing mechanism such as a low-interest revolving loan fund or loan loss reserve program to support maintenance and replacement of existing on-site and community systems for system owners with a demonstrated need for financial assistance (60)
- 11) Propose legislation that requires a return provision for pharmaceutical retailers and distributors. (60)
- 12) Provide funding to assess the potential threats of viruses in source water or in drinking water. (60)
- 13) Legislation/funding for surface water- source water protection programs (60)
- 14) Suggested: Adapt Risk-based management of drinking water threats (?)
- 15) Suggested: Revise statutes to improve agency management and regulation of water/drinking water