

**2019 Legislative Recommendations
Legislative Water Commission
Continuation of the Legislative Water Commission
November, 2018
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Issue: Continuation of the Legislative Water Commission

Legislative actions: Legislation

Legislative direction to continue the Legislative Water Commission

VALUE OF THE LWC: Water is vital to all Minnesotans. The issues surrounding it are wide-ranging and highly varied across Minnesota's many landscapes and interest groups. Because water is important, complex, controversial, and costly, the development of water policy must be undertaken thoughtfully. This 12 member, bi-cameral and bipartisan commission brings value to the Legislature by:

- **Having a dedicated staff person gather and disseminate pertinent information from a large array of stakeholders so members can develop a broad and independent understanding of current and emerging water issues**
- **Providing a venue for members to equitably receive and discuss detailed technical information**
- **Creating a public forum for regular, in-depth interactions between legislators that can then inform legislative work on this subject**
- **Developing water expertise within a larger cadre of Legislators so they can become leaders on water policy**

Background: The Legislative Water Commission (LWC) was originally established in 1994. At that time, the LWC consisted of ten members. Five member were from the Senate and five members from the House of Representatives. Two subcommittees were established, one on groundwater and one on surface water. The LWC was originally charged with the review water policy reports and recommendations of the Environmental Quality Board, the biennial report of the Board of Water and Resources and other water-related reports as required by law or by the Legislature. The LWC also was given authority to oversee activities of the Pollution Control Agency relating to water-pollution control. The LWC was charged with conducting public hearings and to secure data and comments. The LWC was to hold annual hearings on groundwater including a hearing on the groundwater policy. The LWC was charged with making recommendations to assist legislature. Data or information compiled by the LWC was to be made available to the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources and standing and interim committees of the legislature on request of the chair of the respective commission or committee. Members were to study the implementation and effects of sustainable agriculture, including current and potential practices and their effect on water and groundwater. The LWC was abolished in year?

The legislative Water Commission was re-established in 2014. The LWC now consists of twelve members. Six members are from the Senate and six members are from the House of Representatives. Members from the Senate include three majority party members appointed by the majority leader and three minority party members appointed by the minority leader. The six members from the House of Representatives include three majority party members appointed by the speaker of the house and three minority party members appointed by the minority leader. Members serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority and continue to serve until their successors are appointed or until a member is no longer a member of the legislative body that appointed the member to the commission. Vacancies occurring on the commission do not affect the authority of the remaining members of the Legislative Water Commission to carry out the function of the commission. Members elect a chair, vice-chair, and other officers as determined by the commission. The chair may convene meetings as necessary to conduct the duties prescribed by this section.

The LWC can employ staff and contract with consultants as necessary to enable the LWC to carry out its duties and functions. **The LWC reviews** water policy reports and recommendations of the Environmental Quality Board, the Board of Water and Soil Resources, the Pollution Control Agency, the Department of Natural Resources, the Metropolitan Council, and other water-related reports as may be required by law or the legislature. The commission may conduct public hearings and otherwise secure data and comments and can make recommendations as it deems proper to assist the legislature in formulating legislation. Data or information compiled by the Legislative Water Commission or its subcommittees is made available to the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources, the Clean Water Council, and standing and interim committees of the legislature on request of the chair of the respective commission, council, or committee. The commission shall coordinate with the Clean Water Council. The Commission expired on July 1, 2019.

Draft Legislation:

- 1.1 A bill for an act
- 1.2 relating to water; extending the Legislative Water Commission; amending
- 1.3 Minnesota Statutes 2018, section 3.886, subdivision 6.
- 1.4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:
- 1.5 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2018, section 3.886, subdivision 6, is amended to read:
- 1.6 Sub. 6. **Expiration.** This section expires July 1, ~~2019~~ 2021.