

MINNESOTA LEGISLATIVE WATER COMMISSION

2019 Legislative Recommendations

Preserving and Protecting Water for Now and for the Future

Legislative Recommendations —2019

The Legislative Water Commission reviews information and issues related to waters of the state. These reviews also are used to inform the Legislature and the public. They are also used to make recommendations to the Legislature regarding water resources. The Commission is bi-cameral and bi-partisan and is made up of twelve members.

The recommendations that follow are based on review of state, federal, university and stakeholder reports and recommendations since the passage of the Federal Clean Water Act of 1972. Stakeholders prioritized these recommendations during a series of meetings that were held over the summer of 2018. The priorities also were vetted using a survey of more than 500 individuals interested in waters of the state. The 13 recommendations that follow are those having the greatest stakeholder interest. They represent a nonpartisan, statewide path forward for water priorities during the 2019 session. Legislation is being prepared for each of the recommendations. The broad legislative priorities for the 2019 session are as follows:

- Ensuring clean and sustainable drinking water
- Protecting and enhancing stream, lakes and groundwater
- Ensuring that the state is prepared to manage for future changes

Based on those broad issues, the Commission recommends the following legislative actions (recommendations are not prioritized):

1. Update the drinking water service connection fee
2. Expand source water protection for drinking water
3. Reduce salt, save our lakes and rivers
4. Plan for an uncertain future
5. Water retention— Keep water on the land
6. Fix leaking sewer lines and mains

7. Promote healthy soil to improve water quality
8. Increase water education
9. Protect and preserve our lakes
10. Provide clean and sustainable groundwater for the future
11. Provide for continuation of the Legislative Water Commission
12. Provide for continued peer review of changing numeric wastewater standards
13. Address aging and failing water infrastructure

Legislative Recommendations for 2019 (Part II)

Outcome 1: Update MDH drinking water connection fee

Why? Fee protects safe drinking water

What's needed: Bill to increase fee

Outcome 2: Expand source water protection

Why? Need to protect private wells and rivers that provide drinking water

What needed: Bill for monitoring and protection measures

Outcome 3: Reduce salt, save lakes and rivers

Why? We overuse deicers

What's needed: Bill for training and limits on liability for applicators who are trained

Outcome 4: Planning for an uncertain future

Why? We, as a state, need to plan to mitigate for changes that are coming

What 's needed: Direction to prepare a plan as a first step

Outcome 5: Keeping water on the land

Why? Water retention improves agriculture and water

What 's needed: Bill to support the important agricultural practices

Outcome 6: Fixing our leaking sewers

Why? Leaks increase treatment costs, impair water

What 's needed: Bill allowing resources to be used by sanitary districts

Outcome 7: Promote healthy soil for healthy water

Why? Healthy soil provides multiple benefits for agriculture and water

What's needed Bill to provide funding and direction

Outcome 8: Increase water education in our schools

Why? It is currently not adequate

What 's needed: Bill to connect teachers with experts

Outcome 9 Protect and preserve our lakes

Why? Lakes are important and threatened resources

What 's needed: Funds for a preservation plan, as s first step

Outcome 10: Provide clean and sustainable groundwater

Why? Adequate water is needed for drinking, and to support lakes and streams

What 's needed: Planning and implementation funds

Outcome 11: Continuation of the Water Commission

Why? Water is vital, the legislature needs to be informed

What 's needed? Bill to continue the Commission

Outcome 12: Peer review of water quality standards

Why? Ensures outside scientific and public review

What's needed: Bill to memorialize current practice into statute

Outcome 13: Address aging and failing water infrastructure

Why? Our water infrastructure is old and is failing

What's needed? Funding and support for facilities upgrades and management

The COMMISSION reviews information and issues related to waters of the state, holds public hearings on those issues, provides information to members of the legislature and makes recommendations for legislation. The Commission is bi-cameral and bi-partisan and is made up of twelve members. The committee Co-Chairs are Senator Charles Wiger and Representative Paul Torkelson. Members (2018) included:

Senators: Paul Anderson, Rich Draheim, Kent Eken, Jason Isaacson, and Bill Weber

Representatives: David Bly, Peter Fischer, Glenn Gruenhagen, Clark Johnson, and John Poston

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