



minnesota
well owners organization

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April 5, 2024

Sen. Bill Weber and Rep. Hemmingsen-Jaeger Chair

Subcommittee on Water Policy

Via: email to Jim Starl

Re: Progress on addressing SE Minnesota drinking water

Chairs Weber and Hemmingsen-Jaeger.

Thank you again for the chance to focus on the immediate and long-term needs of drinking water protection in SE Minnesota. Of course, this is not just a regional issue, but we are all called to help ensure safe drinking water in every household, both those served by community water supplies and served by private wells.

Since last month, significant attention has focused on the dual realizations of having both an urgent need and a need for long-term risk management, restoration, protection, and enhancement. Progress has been made, and farm groups and water advocates are rallying around the need for safe drinking water.

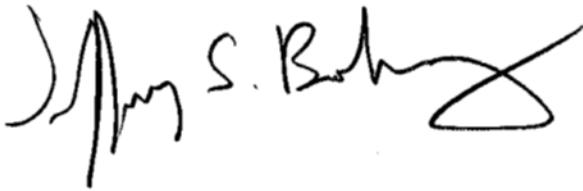
Funding prospects have risen to address the nitrate challenge. Driven by the USEPA Order, a multi-agency work plan, and capacity assessment, significant funding has been recommended from the Supplemental Budget of the Clean Water Council, and the Governor proposed and detailed a total of \$13 million to address nitrates in drinking water and to advance the efforts for the measures that will lessen the current trends, restore the groundwater and protect public health. We are more hopeful than ever before.

Still, ensuring the resources is not without challenges. Two weeks ago, SF5116 was amended in the Senate Environmental, Natural Resources, and Legacy

Committee to delete the \$1.87 million recommended to the Health Department that was marked to develop local capacity in SE Minnesota. The funds would provide the local boots-on-the-ground work to ensure everyone gets their water tested and provide important well-owner education about their wells and drinking water treatment options. We are troubled because the change was made so that 25% of the 2024 Legacy Supplemental Budget would fund the University's proposed 50-year Water Plan. This move supplants action to focus on planning. It creates a series of concerns, from negating 25% of the CWC Supplementn to creating an ethical dilemma for the University as both on the CWC and the Beneficiary of the raid on the Legacy fund. Hopefully, this issue will be fixed before the next Subcommittee meeting.

We are grateful for the attention all parties have devoted to this issue. We are developing clarity in the assessment plans and needs, and more and more people who want to help are coming forward. Ultimately, it is up to the Legislature to shepherd the progress. We need your help.

Sincerely:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey S. Broberg". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J" and a long, horizontal flourish at the end.

Jeffrey S. Broberg, LPG

Director: Minnesota Well Owners Organization