

Broad Support, Likely to Pass (Discussion and Potential Edits Recommended)

Pollutants/Contaminants of Concern

1. Adopt a comprehensive statewide policy and provide funding for county programs to collect and properly dispose of unused pharmaceuticals.
2. The Task Force recommends that the state continue to invest in MPCA's ambient groundwater monitoring program's capacity to test for emerging contaminants, and for MPCA and MDH to continue coordinating on when ecological and public health risk assessments need to be conducted for new contaminants of concern.
3. The Task Force endorses implementation of practices defined in Chloride reduction program | Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, including:
 - a. Institute a Smart Salting certification program that exempts certified operators for private sector businesses from liability.
4. Provide ongoing funding and support for research to improve practices in winter maintenance.

Hydrologic Disruption

1. The Task Force recommends that the MN Department of Agriculture strengthen and expand the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program, to both support and better document implementation and outcomes of functional best management practices that will accelerate achievement of watershed improvements and attain both surface and groundwater protection goals.
2. Run incentives in the right direction:
 - Create incentives, which could include property tax exemptions, for all land used to slow or store stormwater, including buffer strips, saturated buffers, drainage water recycling, and retention ponds and reservoirs, subject to relevant performance standards.
 - Review the viewer's assessment process for public drainage projects and whether water storage practices should be considered benefits in a cost benefit analysis.
 - Remove regulatory barriers, including consideration of exemptions to certain water appropriations permits, that prevent landowners from building temporary retention ponds to store stormwater on their property and then using stored water.
 - In agricultural areas, the barriers to more sustainable land and water practices need to be explored to see where disincentives exist, with a goal to incentivize BMPs. This could include farm loan processes that incentivize or even require tile drain or irrigation as improvements; non-operating landowner/renter payments that do not include land stewardship and soil and water health incentives.

Water Quantity

1. The Task Force encourages the use of community benefit agreements (CBAs) by local governments that incorporate large-volume water users. (Nay: Broton)
2. Large-volume commercial and industrial water users should be required to cover the cost of additional infrastructure (water utility, wastewater) necessary to handle their water demand, which can be negotiated in a transparent manner via CBAs. (Nay: Broton)
3. Run incentives in the right direction: Tax breaks for large water users, such as data centers, must be tied to mandatory water conservation practices such as water reuse, clean energy use with less indirect water footprint.
4. For large-volume commercial and industrial water users, encourage alternate water sources other than groundwater: water reuse, surface water sources, etc. Promote efficient design with emphasis on water circularity. Incentivize closed loop geothermal systems and water reuse systems.
5. The Task Force strongly recommends maintaining an adequate funding base for the Minnesota Geological Survey and continued support for developing county geologic atlases. This will allow for the continued use/refinement/distribution of county geologic atlases which provide the basis of our groundwater supply knowledge in Minnesota.

Agriculture Practices/Nutrients

1. Continue to promote and incentivize policy and programs with the goal of increasing living cover. Many BMP options exist that increase the amount of living cover across the landscape.
2. Promote viable market opportunities for small grain farmers as well as hay and pasture-based livestock producers.
3. Utilize existing programs by expanding access and tailoring to promote nitrate reduction. (i.e., access to Agronomist, funds for testing nitrate in GW, expanded Agriculture Water Quality Certification program in SE MN karst region, MDA's Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan and Groundwater Protection)
4. Build awareness of the critical need for ongoing funding, including Clean Water Fund renewal that must be completed by 2033, and continuation of the Environment and Natural Resource Trust Fund (ENRTF), funded through 2050.

Shoreland/Landscape/Nonpoint Source

1. Provide LGUs Equal and Practical Enforcement Tools. Cities, operating under Minnesota Stat. 462 and broader municipal authority, often have the ability to adopt administrative (civil) citation processes. Counties generally do not have equivalent authority. If the state expects consistent enforcement of shoreland regulations, counties must be given equal and practical civil enforcement authority.

2. Local agency implementation – encourage and support collaborative processes between LGUs, tribal governments, state agencies, soil and water conservation districts, and stakeholders to leverage resources and enhance shared stewardship
3. Provide counties with clear and consistent statutory civil enforcement authority comparable to municipal administrative citation authority.
4. Standardize state technical assistance expectations across agencies to reduce variation in LGU support.
5. Expand incentives and technical assistance for shoreline restoration and maintenance of native vegetation, building upon existing cost-share and demonstration programs. Incentives should prioritize lakes and river reaches identified as high-risk for erosion, nutrient loading, or habitat loss. Provide consistent direction on what approach to use when evaluating shorelines (Score your shore¹ vs. Restore your shore²).
6. The task force strongly encourages continued investment in research, monitoring, and implementation efforts to prevent and mitigate the spread of aquatic invasive species, including maintaining AISPA funding at 2026 levels.

Regulatory Enforcement, etc.

1. Fund the creation of an interagency data and information portal. This portal would provide a single door, or entry, via the Internet to access all state water-related databases. It would provide an alignment of the data but not require all data to conform to the same single database or structure.

Wetlands

1. The task force affirms its commitment to robust implementation of current state wetland protections under the Wetland Conservation Act. (Broton abstain, Pagel nay)
2. Continue implementing programs that restore wetlands such as Minnesota Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) programs, which rely on landowners to apply to participate in the program, both of which strategically place or protect water storage on the landscape.

¹ <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/scoreyourshore/index.html>

² <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/rys/index.html>