

**Memorandum on the State of Minnesota House Bill HF2528 on Water Safety Planning for Cities, to be heard in the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy, Tuesday 14 March 2023, starting at 3 pm.**

**From Peter Calow<sup>\*</sup>; Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota.**

**Email:** pcalow@umn.edu

File 2528 would provide funding for a pilot to address water safety planning for cities. It would involve an effort described, in detail, in the recent UM drinking water report to the legislature (2022). The report is titled: The Future of Minnesota Drinking Water- A framework for managing risk <https://wrc.umn.edu/future-minnesota-drinking-water>

The report concludes: **“Minnesota is a leader in the provision of safe drinking water. But it needs to develop drinking water policy that recognizes important future challenges. One of these, aging infrastructure as a source of contamination, is increasingly being acknowledged as a problem here and throughout the US. Additionally, an ever-increasing number and diversity of drinking water contaminants, arising from industrial, agricultural, and domestic sources will contaminate source waters”.**

A core recommendation of the UMN report is the use of Water Safety Plans. These address challenges from the likely future increase in diversity of contaminants by encouraging an integrated approach to management, centered on catchment (source to sink) and driven by an assessment of hazards likely to be present at particular sites.

This differs from current methodology that, under the Federal Clean Water Act, requires all suppliers of public drinking water to assess and manage it on the basis of USEPA list of priority contaminants no matter where they are. This has the potential for wasting resources unnecessarily on contaminants that may be listed but not present in particular catchments and/or missing those that are present but not on the list.

So the more tailored approach of Water Safety Plans will be more cost-effective.

However, there are 2 challenges. One is legislative and concerns the extent to which the Clean Water Act will allow the more flexible approach. The other is on technical capacity of the providers to assess and manage contaminants. It is likely that that monitoring and managing contaminants of emerging concern will require considerably more flexibility and expertise in exposure and effects assessment than those on the current USEPA, and there is concern that this could overwhelm the current technical abilities of some suppliers.

The proposed pilot, carried out in one or more cities, with close collaboration with MDH and other appropriate agencies, is intended to explore these issues and develop a body of guidance that can be shared with the rest of the community for expanding the Water Safety Plan Approach.

**Date of memo: 3/10/2023**

**\*An author of the UMN report**



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March 13, 2023

Chairman Rick Hanson

House Environmental and Natural Resource Finance and Policy

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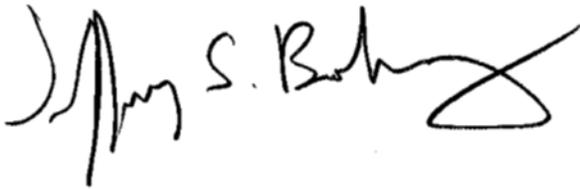
RE: MNWOO Supports HF 2528

The Minnesota Well Owners Organization (MNWOO) is a statewide advocacy group working to assure safe drinking water at the kitchen sink for Private Well Users (PWUS). We are writing today in support of HF 2528, the Water Safety Action Plan appropriations.

While the Water Safety Action Plan outlined in HF 2528 is designed to protect and improve Minnesota's public drinking water systems through pilot studies MNWOO sees wide ranging benefits for protecting our drinking water. Water Safety Action Plans with elements of water safety education, hazard assessment for aquifers and wells and developing hazard assessment resources for water systems these efforts will also apply to all the private well owners who own wells but live in cities and who are served by public water supplies. The proposed pilots will address all these well owners in cities, and the well owners who are outside the cities but within the Drinking Water Supply Management Area. Everyone using groundwater in the area will benefit from well-crafted pilot programs.

Water Safety Action Plans have a broader reach than the mandates of the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act. Pilot projects funded by HF2528 that focus on risk assessment and risk management for drinking water can show new and better ways to assure that all Minnesotans have sustainable drinking water supplies.

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

Attachments: