



CONSERVATION
MINNESOTA



February 8, 2022

Representative Fue Lee
485 State Office Building
100 Rev. Martin Luther King Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Lee and members of the House Capital Investment Committee,

As a coalition of organizations representing workers, environmental interests, and cities across Minnesota, we are writing to encourage you to include a substantial investment in Minnesota's water infrastructure as you assemble your 2022 Capital Budget bill.

Minnesota is "the land of 10,000 lakes" and Minnesotans value clean lakes and rivers, along with safe drinking water. Communities across our state require up-to-date and efficient water infrastructure to attract and retain businesses and residents. But Minnesota has fallen behind in maintaining our water infrastructure. Recent reports by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) have estimated more than \$11.5 billion in future wastewater and drinking water infrastructure investment needs. This threatens the resilience of our communities, the health of our environment, and the safety of Minnesotans. We also have significant work to do when it comes to removing lead service lines—an important health issue for Minnesotans across the state.

The federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Act is a good start and will lead to additional federal assistance for water infrastructure over the next five years. However, this only covers a fraction of the outstanding costs. Without meaningful state investment, our water systems will continue to fall into disrepair, adding to the financial burden on ratepayers and small communities, while jeopardizing our health and water resources. With a projected surplus of more than \$7.7 billion and historically low borrowing rates, now is the time for Minnesota to make a transformational investment in our water infrastructure.

We fully support the funding of the Governor's Public Facility Authority recommendations that you are reviewing, but we believe that the amounts set forth are a floor, not a ceiling. To address the clean water needs of our communities and citizens, we believe an even larger investment will be necessary. A substantial investment in Minnesota's water infrastructure will:

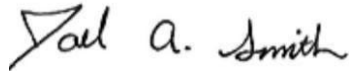
- Ensure all Minnesotan residents and their families have access to safe drinking water
- Support communities across the state by providing the water infrastructure maintenance and upgrades needed to attract and retain residents and businesses
- Keep water bill costs low for residents and businesses

- Protect Minnesota's lakes and rivers from pollutants by ensuring that our wastewater treatment systems are up-to-date
- Reduce energy use through efficiency improvements that lower costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Create good-paying jobs for Minnesota workers

As a coalition representing a broad array of interests, we look forward to continuing to work with your committee and other stakeholders throughout the legislative session on advancing a capital investment bill that provides a transformational investment in the state's water infrastructure—one that benefits all Minnesotans.

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to support workers, the environment, and communities across the state.

Sincerely,



Joel Smith, President and Business Manager of LIUNA Minnesota and North Dakota



Paul Austin, Executive Director of Conservation Minnesota



Pat Baustian, Mayor of Luverne and Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities President

cc: Jim Schowalter, Commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget
Katrina Kessler, Commissioner of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Charlie Zelle, Chairman of the Metropolitan Council
Jeff Freeman, Executive Director of the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority
Chris Schmitter, Chief of Staff
Leah Montgomery, Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy and Legislative Affairs
Nathan Jesson, Policy Advisor
Rachel Ganani, Policy Advisor
Rachel Dame, Policy Advisor
Pete Engler, Policy Advisor