



February 25, 2022

Chair Jim Davnie
Education Finance Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Davnie and members of the Education Finance Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Mower County Soil & Water District in Austin, MN, (also the staff for the Cedar River Watershed District) in support of Wilderness Inquiry's proposal for an expansion of credit recovery that provides hands-on opportunities outdoors for students to recover academic credits in science, language arts and history.

Wilderness Inquiry is a key partner in delivering credit recovery through this innovative, outdoor platform and has been doing so for nearly a decade in the Twin Cities. We hope this vital legislation will allow this program to expand throughout the State of Minnesota.

In Austin, Mower SWCD/Cedar River Watershed District staff have partnered with Wilderness Inquiry since 2018 to connect more than 2,000 young people to the incredible outdoor resources available in the Austin area through the Canoemobile program. Youth have experienced our natural spaces and paddled on the Cedar River State Water Trail, and we now are ready to take the program deeper.

Please consider this letter as our support for this partnership and project. We look forward to continuing this spring to connect with Wilderness Inquiry's Canoemobile on the Cedar River and hope that in future years we can implement credit-recovery programs as well.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Ruzek". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Tim Ruzek
Water Plan & Outreach Coordinator
Mower SWCD and Cedar River Watershed District – Austin, MN