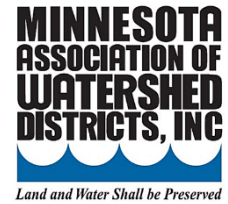


# Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts (MAWD)

## Legislative Committee Meeting

September 29, 2022

Via Zoom



Meeting participants: Chair Jackie Anderson, MAWD Board (Comfort Lake-Forest Lake WD); Region 1 Manager Linda Vavra, MAWD Board (Bois de Sioux WD); Region 1 Administrator Myron Jesme, Red Lake WD; Region 2 Administrator Michelle Overholser, Yellow Medicine River WD; Phil Belfiori, Vadnais Lake Area Watershed Management Organization; and Jan Voit MAWD Interim Executive Director.

Absent: Region 1 Manager Gene Tiedemann, MAWD Board (Red Lake WD); Region 2 Manager Ruth Schaefer, MAWD Board (Middle Fork Crow River WD); and Region 3 Manager Shawn Murphy, Capitol Region WD

### **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Jackie Anderson called meeting to order at 1:06. She explained that the purpose of the meeting was to review the 2022 legislative platform and determine any known changes. The committee will meet again, shortly after the annual meeting, to incorporate all adopted resolutions into the Active MAWD Resolutions document. The final platform recommendation will be sent to the MAWD Board in early January 2023 for approval.

### **TASK ONE. REVIEW 2022 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM RESULTS**

The Legislative Committee received an update from Ray Bohn, MAWD Lobbyist, on the 2022 Legislative Session and work done on MAWD Legislative Priorities. He explained the effects of COVID on lobbying and bills that did not pass. He also stated that he was hesitant to contact legislators regarding key issues at this point because it is mid-season for campaigns and candidates are busy. He was asked to develop a list of legislators that would be crucial to contact regarding the general operating levy so members can begin contacting those individuals. Discussion was held regarding the importance of using the MAWD regional meetings to invite legislators and candidates to discuss watershed issues.

### **TASK TWO. PREPARE A PRELIMINARY 2023 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM RECOMMENDATION**

The following information was provided to committee members in the meeting packet. *The Legislative Committee is asked to prepare a legislative platform to present for consideration to the MAWD Board of Directors (Board) at their January meeting each year. To effectively use the time when the legislature is not in session, the legislative committee is asked to prepare a preliminary platform recommendation after the Legislature adjourns sine die. This allows time to prepare for next year's session. After the MAWD Annual Meeting and Resolutions Hearing, which is held in December, the committee will meet again. At that meeting, priorities will be assigned to the newly passed resolutions and determine if any of the new issues should rise above the top priority issues identified in the preliminary platform. To facilitate formation of the preliminary platform, we will be reviewing the list of active resolutions, archive any resolved issues, and assign a priority status to each issue. Committee recommendations will be sent to the Board for review and approval.*

*It should be noted that in July, the Board voted to extend the sunseting deadline for current resolutions by two years due to the pandemic and its influence on lobbying efforts.*

The committee discussed each item on the 2022 platform and determined whether recommendations should be made to change priorities. Preliminary recommendations are included on the next page.

As far as moving forward with platform items that require legislative action, Ray Bohn will meet with the Revisor during the process of drafting legislation once we have an author.

2023 MAWD Legislative Lobbying Platform - PRELIMINARY		
<b>PRIORITY A: TOP PRIORITIES FOR 2022 LEGISLATIVE ACTION</b>		
TAX BILL	2018-02	Increase or remove the \$250k General Fund tax levy Limit
	2021-01, 02	Seek capacity funding for the \$250k capped rural WDs and SWCDs from state and county general funds
	2021-06	Require 60-day review periods when state agencies adopt new policies
	2021-04, 07	Use CWFs for implementation, not capacity; require metro watershed-based implementation grants to go through approved 103B plans
<b>PRIORITY B: LEGISLATION TO SUPPORT</b>		
22 Bonding Bill	2016-08	Bonding Bill, Flood Hazard Mitigation Program
	2017-04	Limited liability for certified commercial salt applicators
	2021-03	Allow greater flexibility in open meeting law for virtual attendance, not just during a pandemic
	2021-05	Change crop insurance provisions to cover crop losses within impoundment areas
	2020-01	Allow appeals for public waters designations
	2020-02	Limiting negative impacts from wake boats by supporting scientific studies by the University of Minnesota
<b>PRIORITY C: TOP PRIORITIES FOR 2022 ADMINISTRATIVE LOBBYING RESOURCES</b>		
	LGWRT	CWC - Increase Clean Water Funding for watershed-based implementation programs
	2017-07	MDH - WD/WMO representation on Stormwater Reuse Task Force
	2020-04	DNR - temporary water storage on DNR wetlands during major flood events
<b>Resolutions for the Parking Lot (Support if opportunities arise)</b>		
	2018-04	Require WD Permits for the DNR
	2019-04	Clarify county financing obligations and allow WD G.O. bonds for drainage systems
	2017-06	Stable General Fund allocation for flood damage reduction projects
	2017-05	WD general operating levy adjustment: Middle Fork Crow River
	2019-08	WD general operating levy adjustment: Heron Lake
	2019-09	WD general operating levy adjustment: Shell Rock River
	2019-10	WD general operating levy adjustment: Pelican River
	2019-11	WD general operating levy adjustment: Buffalo Red River
	2018-06	DNR - ensure timely updates to Wildlife Management Area (WMA) plans
	2017-02	DNR - temporary lake quarantine authorization to control the spread of aquatic invasive species
	2019-07	DNR - change Chinese Mystery Snail designation and support research needs
	2019-01	DNR - streamline DNR permit process
	2018-08	DNR - reinforce existing rights to maintain/repair 103E drainage systems
	2020-03	BWSR - require soil health goals in metro watershed management plans
	2019-05	BWSR - WD Membership on Wetland Technical Evaluation Panels
	2019-03	BWSR - Support watershed-based management in MN River Basin through increased storage
	2018-03	BWSR - require timely appointments to the BWSR Board
	2019-02	MPCA - default classification for artificial watercourses that serve as public drainage ditches
<b>LEGISLATION TO DEFEAT - This legislation died at the end of the session. Watch to see if reintroduced.</b>		
HF 0368/SF 0711	Green/Utke	Remove eminent domain powers for WDs
HF 0884/SF 1539	Green/Utke	Requires county commissioners to only appoint county commissioners to serve as WD managers
HF 0989/SF 0881	Marquart/Ruud	\$22M CWF appropriation to SWCDs
HF 1586/SF 2214	Torkelson/Johnson	Fund a SWCD/WD merger study once a 1W1P is approved
HF 1718	Fischer	Establish SWCD account in the special revenue fund, \$12M/year for capacity, 1% for BWSR administration
HF 2030/SF 1835	Nelson/Kiffmeyer	Modifying uses of positive general fund; removes CWF payback from \$22M SWCD capacity funds

### TASK THREE. REVIEW LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES IN THE DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN

The following information was provided to committee members in the meeting packet.

*In the strategic planning process, several suggestions were made for evaluating and improving the resolutions and legislative processes. The committee will discuss the goal, objectives, strategies, and tactics in the draft Strategic Plan (Plan).*

Discussion was held regarding the recommendations made by the Minnesota Association of Watershed Administrators (MAWA) and the importance of developing a platform similar to that of the Association of Minnesota Counties and the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. No changes were made to the draft Plan recommendations. Attendees were asked to provide any changes by the end of the day on September 30. The Plan will be discussed in more depth at a future meeting following the Plan's adoption by the membership.

### TASK FOUR. DISCUSS CONNECTING WITH LEGISLATORS AND LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATES

The following information was provided to committee members in the meeting packet.

*The committee will discuss the information provided in the legislative update and develop suggestions for MAWD members to connect with their legislators and legislative candidates.*

Chair Anderson read the recommendations that were made in December of 2020. There was an email delivery issue before the meeting, so she will provide this information to the committee following the meeting. Chair Anderson pointed out that the recommendations made in 2020 were very similar to those in the MAWA letter and in the draft Plan, which is a good sign that the Plan's direction should be acceptable to many diverse organizations in the state. The 2020 recommendations were adopted by the Board but only partially implemented due to the pandemic.

The meeting adjourned at 2:30 p.m. Notes submitted by Jan Voit