

MAWD Legislative Talking Points

MAWD's priority legislative issues include:

1. Clarifying language on the 2015 buffers legislation to enhance the implementation of the buffers law --

WD need clarifying language on the 2015 buffers law to make the buffer legislation workable. If not, we will be susceptible to lawsuits from landowners and buffer advocates alike. We need better definitions for public waters, shorelands, public v. private ditches, who has jurisdiction and when, and a number of other minor changes to the law. If not, the lack of clarity will act as a barrier to WDs getting involved in implementation of this law.

2. Advocate for sufficient funds (\$20 million) for the Flood Hazard Mitigation Program (FHM) in the bonding bill to cover the needs for the Red River Valley and other watershed districts across the state.

It is critical that we keep the funds reliable as we move forward on our FHM efforts in the RRV and the rest of the state. To not do so only costs the state and locals more money in flood damage in the future.

The DNR FHM program has been very successful and fair in distribution of the funds allocated to it and maximizes the use of the funds.

We are supporting the Governor's request for \$30 million for BWSR as a match with the FSA for RIM and to implement a new CREP in Minnesota. These funds will help buttress the Governor's buffers program.

We are also supporting the Governor's recommendation of \$5 million for the Local Gov't Roads Wetlands Replacement Program. These funds are critical to keeping up with the state commitment to road authorities in implementation of WCA.

3. Advocate \$500,000 for the Lac Qui Parle Yellow Bank WD (Area II) for an engineering study on two floodwater retention ponds.

These funds are particularly important due to the nature of the topography and hydrology in that area of the state. The elevation from South Dakota into Minnesota is very dramatic and causes severe damage to the area. The only way to reduce this problem is by slowing down the flow of water.

4. On the tax side we are advocating returning the effective date of local government sales tax exemption to January 1, 2016 from January 1, 2017.

This tax exemption effective date was changed last year and we believe it should be moved

back to the original date when passed. This legislation will cost special taxing districts and joint powers organizations funds that were being planned to be spent on projects at the local level. There were no hearings on this legislation last year.