



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Mark Dayton

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

May 30, 2017

The Honorable Michelle L. Fischbach
President of the Senate
Room 2113, Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Madam President:

On the advice of my General Counsel, to ensure there are no legal challenges, I am signing Chapter 96, Senate File 550 rather than allowing it to become law without my signature.

Although I am signing this bill, I am deeply disappointed that the Legislature cut or reduced eleven LCCMR-recommended projects. This action seriously undermines the integrity of a process that includes citizens who volunteer hundreds of hours each year reviewing and recommending project for the funding. It is very concerning to me that the projects deleted from the recommendations appear to be more focused on making a political statement on climate change, renewable energy, and equity, rather than reflecting a thoughtful reallocation of funds by the Legislature. Minnesota's demographics are changing, and we have an increasingly diverse population. Supporting diversity in environmental fields is critical to the strength of our economy and our great culture of hunting, fishing, and conservation. Minnesota has been a leader in renewable energy and addressing climate change. It is irresponsible to ignore the increased frequency of extreme weather events related to climate change, and the resulting vast damage to our communities. I find it troubling that over the course of my administration the Legislature has zeroed out funding for several climate research projects without explanation. It is clear that there are many members who are not interested in understanding the science, no matter the adverse impact on our state.

I regret that my actions cannot restore funding for these organizations, agencies, and institutions who through no fault of their own were stripped of the money they should have received through a fair and open process including:

- Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers-(reduced by \$1 M)
- Analyzing Climate Data to Aid Local Planning Implementation Efforts U of MN- (cut)
- Youth Convening Minnesota –Phase II - Climate Generation (cut)
- Solar Cells Manufacturing Research U of MN (cut)
- Community-Scale Energy Storage Guide for Renewable Energy U of MN (cut)
- Develop Solar-Powered Robots for Weed Control in Agricultural Fields U of MN (cut)
- Mississippi River Habitat Restoration Planning at Halls Island Minneapolis Park & Rec (cut)
- Scientific & Natural Areas Acquisition and Restoration MN DNR (reduced \$2 million)
- County Geologic Atlases - Continuation U of MN -Geological-(reduced \$2.729M)
- Native Prairie Stewardship and Prairie Bank Easement Acquisition MN DNR (reduced by \$825,000)
- Workshops and Outreach to Protect Raptors from Lead Poisoning U of MN (cut)

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I find it extremely troubling that the Legislature claims to lack a voice in project selection, when 12 of the 17 members of the LCCMR are either legislators or are citizens appointed by the Legislature and uses that excuse to delete or reduce funding for some projects.

In addition to my disappointment that the Legislature chose to cut or reduce these projects to provide an additional \$13.5 million for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), a program which I strongly support, I also want to state my deep disappointment that the Legislature only included a fraction of the funding I requested for CREP in the bonding bill and the Clean Water Fund. In January, I stood shoulder to shoulder with Republicans and Democrats to sign an agreement with the federal government to support CREP. However, the Legislature chose to willingly disregard the plan I put forward that would have almost entirely provided for the state's portion of CREP funding in a way that would have preserved funding for the eleven LCCMR projects.

To avoid losing federal funds for CREP, the Legislature will need to appropriate an additional \$33.7 million in the 2018 Legislative session. I expect that with a positive forecast, the Clean Water Fund payback of \$22 million will allow for the restoration of my 2017 recommendations, including \$17.25 million to CREP. Further, I will be submitting a bonding request that will assure that CREP is fully funded.

Sincerely,



Mark Dayton
Governor

cc: Senator Paul E. Gazelka, Senate Majority Leader
Senator Thomas M. Bakk, Senate Minority Leader
Senator Torrey Westrom, Minnesota Senate
Representative Kurt Daudt, Speaker of the House
Representative Melissa Hortman, House Minority Leader
Representative Josh Heintzman, House of Representatives
The Honorable Steve Simon, Secretary of State
Mr. Cal R. Ludeman, Secretary of the Senate
Mr. Patrick Murphy, Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives
Mr. Paul Marinac, Revisor of Statutes