

FACT SHEET | Clean, Affordable Water For All Minnesotans

An Opportunity Agenda for a Better Minnesota

In the Land of 10,000 Lakes, all Minnesotans should expect to have water that is clean and affordable – no matter where you live. More than 40 percent of Minnesota’s waters are currently listed as impaired or polluted, while aquatic invasive species have infested more than 550 lakes statewide. Experts estimate that Minnesota communities will need \$11 billion in water infrastructure improvements over the next two decades to replace and upgrade aging treatment facilities and expand systems to accommodate economic growth and increased demand. That is why Governor Dayton’s Opportunity Agenda would make critical investments to provide clean, affordable water for all Minnesotans, everywhere in Minnesota.

Improving Water Quality Across Minnesota

- **Improving Water Quality at its Source** – Governor Dayton has proposed a \$214 million investment from Minnesota’s Clean Water Fund. This funding will support local government efforts to reduce nutrient pollution in Minnesota water and protect sensitive groundwater and drinking water resources. Doing so will reduce water pollution, save money, and provide more reliable sources of drinking water.
- **Protecting Groundwater from Contamination** – When the state’s 77 unlined construction and debris landfills were created, materials such as brick, mortar, and wood were not expected to pose groundwater threats. However, construction materials have changed over time to include more plastics, adhesives, and chemicals, which threaten clean groundwater. The Dayton Administration has proposed a \$2 million investment to remediate these landfills and reduce the future waste disposed in them.
- **Funding Farmers, Protecting Waters** – In January 2017, Governor Dayton signed a landmark agreement to provide \$350 million in federal funding directly to Minnesota farmers, while working to protect and improve waters across 60,000 acres in 54 Minnesota counties. As part of the agreement, Minnesota must commit \$150 million in funding, with \$54.8 million already invested. Governor Dayton is proposing to invest \$30 million for this effort as part of his Opportunity Agenda, to protect and improve our waters while supporting Minnesota farmers.
- **Water Quality Buffer Aid Payments** – In 2015, Governor Dayton and bipartisan lawmakers in the Legislature started a new effort to protect and improve water quality in Minnesota, requiring water quality buffers to reduce runoff into Minnesota waters. To help alleviate the cost of compliance for Minnesota farmers, the Dayton Opportunity Agenda would invest \$40 an acre to provide direct payments to farmers implementing water quality buffers on their land.

Investing in Local Clean Water Infrastructure

- **Water Infrastructure Funding Program** – Governor Dayton’s Jobs Bill would provide \$80 million for the Water Infrastructure Funding Program to increase aid to communities that are rehabilitating aging wastewater and drinking water infrastructure systems. Grant funding is based on the average household income of residents and is designed to keep clean water affordable for Minnesotans.
- **Point Source Implementation Grant Program** – Approximately 4,603 bodies of water in Minnesota are now impaired – meaning they aren’t swimmable, fishable, or most importantly, drinkable. The Dayton Jobs Bill would invest \$62 million in the Point Source Implementation Grant Program to help lift the burden on local governments to pay for needed water treatment plant upgrades, begin improving water quality across the state, and reduce water costs for Minnesota consumers.
- **Clean Water & Drinking Water Revolving Funds** – Governor Dayton’s Jobs Bill includes \$25 million in funding to match federal grants for affordable, low-interest loans to help local governments update essential clean water and drinking water projects to serve residents and businesses.

Protecting Minnesota's Wetland and Habitats

- **Wetland Replacement** – Wetlands provide valuable habitat for wildlife, filter out pollutants and sediment for the protection of downstream water quality in lakes and streams, recharge groundwater supplies, and lessen the impacts of floods by storing water during intense rain storms and snow melt. The Dayton Opportunity Agenda includes a \$15 million investment to replace wetlands that have been lost to road construction across the state.
- **Wetland Permitting Reform** – The federal government currently regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into Minnesota's waters, including wetlands. This federal regulation creates a complex regulatory web for businesses, which must comply with both state and federal law. The Dayton Administration has proposed a \$500,000 investment to fund efforts to streamline permitting requirements and assume regulatory authority from the federal government. Upon completion of this reform, Minnesotans in need of a discharge permit would only need state approval before proceeding, saving time and money.