



November 19, 2010

Dear Governor-elect Mark Dayton:

As you await the finalization of the recount and prepare to take office as Minnesota's next governor, we – the 80 conservation and environmental member organizations of the Minnesota Environmental Partnership – want to thank you for your ongoing support for what Minnesotans value so much about our state: our lakes, rivers and streams; wildlife habitat; natural areas; and parks and trails.

We applaud you for your positions outlined during the campaign: your strong support for protecting the Clean Water, Land and Legacy funding; your commitment to maintaining the nuclear moratorium; your determination to bolster the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's protections; and your pledge to restore funding that will leverage federal dollars for Reinvest in Minnesota and the Wetlands Reserve Program.

We also recognize the substantial political and economic challenges you face as you begin your term. However, under your leadership, we believe we will be able to Protect Minnesota's Future and continue to pass onto future generations our Great Outdoors heritage. Much of this work can be accomplished within the Executive Branch with smart appointments, effective use of existing environmental programs, and wise regulatory decisions.

Below are principles we ask you to consider as you make commissioner appointments to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and Departments of Natural Resources, Agriculture, Health, and Commerce; develop your budget recommendations; and consider policy directions:

- **Independent, Open and Transparent.** In making appointments to your Administration, we ask that you seek key agency leaders who are truly independent of the industries they regulate; value transparency and openness with the public; and understand and embrace the vital role that community, non-government organizations can play in accomplishing our shared goals.
- **Defend Minnesota's Environmental Policy Foundation.** Minnesota has a long history of environmental protections. Environmental Review, Community Rights, Clean Energy Policies and adequate Transit Funding are at the heart of these policies. We cannot allow promises of short-term gains to threaten these long-term assurances for clean water and air and the health of all Minnesotans.
- **Safeguard Investments to Protect Minnesota's Future.** As we near the 2011 Minnesota legislative session, facing continuing state budget challenges, we assure you that we will remind Minnesota legislators of their responsibility to uphold the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment contained in Article XI, Section 15 of the Minnesota Constitution stating in part: "money under this section must supplement traditional sources of funding for these purposes and may not be used as a substitute." Thank you for your strong support of this position during the campaign and we look forward to working with you to preserve the voters'

intent as the funds are invested. As the state's largest environmental and conservation coalition, we have worked with our partners to develop these three principles to test compliance with these provisions:

- Minnesota's Great Outdoors must maintain its traditional share of the total state general fund budget and not dip below its already small one percent proportion – a 30-year low. Any general fund cuts proposed for environmental and conservation programs must not result in a percentage reduction in these programs that is greater than any percentage reduction in total general fund spending;
 - Statutorily dedicated funds already in existence for Minnesota's Great Outdoors cannot be raided to pay for other budget items; and
 - Any capital investments for Minnesota's Great Outdoors must be maintained at a level at least equal to the 10-year average of 22 percent of the total general obligation bonding proposed or authorized.
- **Make The Amendment Work For Clean Water.** We are at risk of allowing the Amendment's Clean Water Funds to be spent across the state, but not deliver clean water. Money from the Amendment funding must be targeted to where it will do the most good. Clean-up plans for polluted waters must include firm timelines and benchmarks for measuring success. The money should not pay people merely to comply with existing laws. Your commissioners will play a central role in making this happen without the need for any new legislation.
 - **Protect Our Water from Toxic Mining Pollution.** Any non-ferrous sulfide mining that will pollute Minnesota's lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands or groundwater must not be allowed. Again, your commissioners will have the power to protect Minnesota taxpayers by requiring an appropriate damage deposit before these mines can start operating and fully enforcing existing laws and regulations.
 - **Clean Energy & Good Jobs: Harvest Energy From The Sun.** We ask for your support of measures to increase the growth of our clean energy sector and our state's solar energy usage, including a standard that would require 10 percent of our electricity to come from clean renewable solar sources by 2030 to increase manufacturing and construction jobs while reducing our dependence on imported energy.

At this critical juncture as you begin to select your cabinet and assemble your budget, we respectfully request an opportunity to meet with you or your lead staff to discuss upcoming appointments and these principles in more detail. Our coalition has appointed a small group of individuals to represent our broad membership in this discussion. Please contact me directly to arrange a time.

Thank you for your time and attention to these important matters.



Steve Morse
Executive Director
Minnesota Environmental Partnership
stevemorse@mepartnership.org
651-290-0154
www.MEPartnership.org

Members of the Minnesota Environmental Partnership

1000 Friends of Minnesota
Alliance for Metropolitan Stability
Alliance for Sustainability
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
Audubon Minnesota
Austin Coalition for Environmental Sustainability
Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota
Carpenter Saint Croix Valley Nature Center
Center for Energy and Environment
Clean Up the River Environment (CURE)
Clean Water Action Alliance of Minnesota
Community Design Center of Minnesota
Conservation Minnesota
Dovetail Partners, Inc.
Duluth Audubon Society
Eco Education
Environment Minnesota
Environmental Law & Policy Center
Eureka Recycling
Fresh Energy
Freshwater Society
Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness
Friends of the Cloquet Valley State Forest
Friends of the Mississippi River
Friends of the Parks & Trails of Saint Paul and Ramsey County
Friends of Washington County
Greater Minnesota Housing Fund
Green Institute
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Institute for Energy and Environmental Research (IEER)
Institute for Local Self-Reliance
International Wolf Center
Izaak Walton League of America - Midwest Office
Izaak Walton League of America – Minnesota Division
Kids for Saving Earth
Land Stewardship Project
League of Women Voters of Minnesota Education Fund
Leech Lake Area Watershed Foundation
Lower Phalen Creek Project
Lutheran Coalition for Public Policy in Minnesota
Mankato Area Environmentalists
Minnesota Catholic Conference
Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy
Minnesota Conservation Federation
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits
Minnesota Environmental Initiative
Minnesota Food Association

Minnesota Forestry Association
Minnesota Ground Water Association
Minnesota Land Trust
Minnesota Naturalists' Association
Minnesota Ornithologists' Union
Minnesota Public Interest Research Group
Minnesota Renewable Energy Society
Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter
Minnesota Waters
Minnesotans for Responsible Recreation
National Wildlife Federation
Northeastern Minnesotans for Wilderness
Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota
Permaculture Research Institute Cold Climate
Renewing the Countryside
Saint Croix River Association
Saint Paul Audubon Society
Save Lake Superior Association
Sierra Club, North Star Chapter
Southeastern Minnesotans for Environmental Protection (SEMEP)
Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota
The Conservation Fund
The Minnesota Project
The Nature Conservancy of Minnesota
The Trust for Public Land
Transit for Livable Communities
Trout Unlimited - Minnesota State Council
Union of Concerned Scientists
Voyageurs National Park Association
WaterLegacy
Will Steger Foundation
Windustry
Women's Environmental Institute