



2012 Priorities of the Minnesota Environmental Partnership

Protecting what Minnesotans love



The Minnesota Environmental Partnership is the largest statewide coalition of environmental and conservation nonprofits.



Together, coalition members and supporters work for clean energy, clean water, and investments in Minnesota's Great Outdoors through policy initiatives, public education, and community events like the Living Green Expo.



Clean Energy

Minnesota is a leader in establishing laws that help put our state on the path to a clean energy future. Policies like the Next Generation Energy Act, which includes the Renewable Energy Standard, exist to help Minnesota install clean, sustainable energy, which protects our land, air, water and public health.

But even with these clean energy laws in place, **there is more we can – and should – do now to tap the environmental and economic benefits of clean, renewable energy.**



Solar energy, good jobs

Minnesota has largely untapped resources of wind and solar and ranks in the top 10 states for solar energy generation potential. Minnesota already has a base of solar manufacturers, installers and researchers in the state – including more than 50 solar energy businesses that provide good jobs to real Minnesotans today. To encourage growth and create more solar jobs in the coming years, Minnesota needs to implement policies that help spur more manufacturing and development of solar projects and businesses here at home.

That's why MEP has joined a coalition of businesses, labor groups, consumers, and solar advocates working to make it easier for schools, police and fire stations, and other public buildings to install solar projects on their facilities.

More than **85%** of Minnesota voters support **increasing the use of wind and solar energy** to meet Minnesota's future needs.*



Additionally, we support a Solar Energy Standard (SES) – a policy that will ensure Minnesota gets 10 percent of its energy from solar by the year 2030.

Smart, clean energy investments today mean better jobs and a healthier environment for our children and grandchildren.

82% of Minnesota voters support a policy that would **simplify and encourage the installation of solar panels on public buildings** and establish criteria to determine the number of new jobs created.*

According to The Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts, solar energy development creates 14.1 jobs per \$1 million invested vs. 5.3 jobs for fossil fuel energy development:

\$1 million invested in solar energy creates 14 jobs



\$1 million invested in fossil fuel energy creates 5 jobs



By investing in solar in Minnesota today, our children and grandchildren will enjoy better jobs, cleaner air and cheaper electricity. It's clear: solar energy works for Minnesota.

Clean Water

Minnesotans value our water: Whether it's the mighty Mississippi, Lake Superior, the Boundary Waters, or the lakes, rivers or streams in our own community, we know it's up to all of us to make sure these beloved waters are protected.

Unfortunately, there's significant work to be done.

According to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, only about 20 percent of Minnesota's lakes and rivers have been fully tested for pollution.



The good news is that thanks to the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment passed by Minnesota voters in 2008, our state has dedicated funding to help clean up our lakes, rivers and streams. **We must make sure the Amendment's "Clean Water dollars" are not wasted or raided for other purposes, and are targeted to projects where they will do the most good.**

Doing more, not less, for our water

In our Land of 10,000 Lakes, water is part of our way of life. Minnesotans are understandably concerned about pollution of these waters:

84% are concerned about pollution of the Mississippi River.*

80% are concerned about runoff (like chemicals, sewage and pesticides) from farms polluting Minnesota's lakes, rivers and streams.*

79% are concerned about runoff from mines threatening to pollute the Boundary Waters and Lake Superior.*





Clearly, Minnesotans have serious concerns about the waters they love and believe we should do more to protect and clean up our water.

One significant way to protect Minnesota's water is to ensure our existing environmental review and permitting laws are maintained and effectively enforced. We must do more, not less, for our lakes, rivers and streams.

67% of Minnesota voters believe environmental laws in our state should be tougher or better enforced.*

Aquatic Invasive Species

Minnesotans value our lakes, rivers, streams and our Great Outdoors. But threats loom large in Minnesota waters. Aquatic Invasive Species like zebra mussels and Asian carp have devastating effects on Minnesota's waters. **We support increasing boat license fees in order to provide funding to help stop the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species in Minnesota waters.**

79% of Minnesota voters favor a fee increase to fight invasive species and prevent further damage to Minnesota's waters.*

Support for this user-fee holds strong across various demographics, including boat owners and political party affiliation.



Clean water isn't a Democrat or Republican issue: It's a Minnesota value.

Safeguarding Investments



When we have something we love, its protection is worth the investment. Our lakes, prairie lands, forests, parks and trails, and more contribute to Minnesota's economy, the health of our families, and our treasured Minnesota way of life.

That's why even in tough economic times, we must maintain traditional levels of funding to our Great Outdoors, and uphold the voter-approved Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment as outlined in the Minnesota Constitution:

"money under this section must supplement traditional sources of funding for these purposes and may not be used as a substitute."

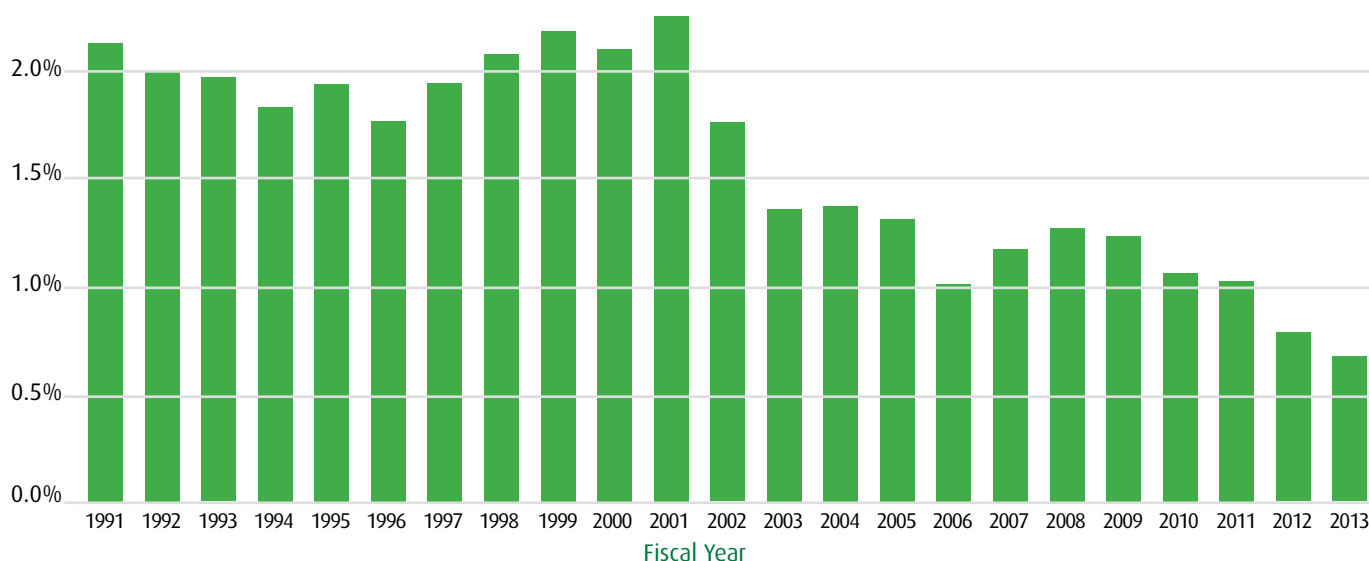
— Article XI, Section 15 of the Minnesota Constitution

Our coalition of nonprofits has developed three principles to help state leaders make funding decisions that are in line with the Minnesota Constitution:

- Statutorily dedicated funds for Minnesota's Great Outdoors cannot be raided to pay for other budget items.
- Any capital investments for Minnesota's Great Outdoors must be maintained at a level at least equal to the 10-year average of 22%.
- Funding for Minnesota's Great Outdoors should be maintained at traditional levels of the general fund budget and not dip below its already small proportion – a historic low.

71% of Minnesota voters say we must not let elected officials raid constitutionally dedicated conservation funds to solve short-term state budget problems.*

Conservation and Environment as percentage of all state general fund spending, 1991-2013



Source: Minnesota Management and Budget, Consolidated Fund Statements and General Fund Statements; analysis by Conservation Minnesota



License fees to help our wildlife

The Game and Fish fund revenues no longer cover expenditures. Costs have increased in the past 10 years while the basic prices of fishing and hunting licenses have not. We support an increase in hunting and angling fees to ensure adequate funding for our fisheries and wildlife programs.

If no changes are made, the Game and Fish Fund will go into the red in 2013 — significantly undercutting the strong fish and wildlife programs and habitat Minnesota hunters and anglers enjoy.

Preserving the Constitution's current budget guidelines

The Minnesota Environmental Partnership joins with numerous organizations and individuals to oppose any amendments to Minnesota's Constitution that would restrict the authority of lawmakers and the Governor to raise and spend revenue. Amendments such as these would damage Minnesota's economic future by sharply limiting Minnesota's flexibility to respond to changing demographics and emerging needs.

Above all, smart budget decisions and investments in Minnesota's Great Outdoors today will ensure that the natural areas we love will be protected and preserved for generations to come.

Members of the Minnesota Environmental Partnership

Minnesota
Environmental
Partnership



Alliance for Metropolitan Stability
Alliance for Sustainability
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
Audubon Minnesota
Austin Coalition for Environmental Sustainability
Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota
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