



*Working to protect the Mississippi River
and its watershed in the Twin Cities area*

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Governor Mark Dayton
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Governor Dayton,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR), as well as our thousands of members, volunteers and advocates, I would like to thank you for your unwavering support for the recently adopted Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area (MRCCA) Rule.

FMR helped to instigate the effort to authorize and fund the development of a new rule for the Twin Cities segment of the river, which is also the only National Park along the entire length of the Mississippi dedicated to its interpretation and protection. We were the lead advocates for the rulemaking when it successfully passed and was signed into law by Governor Pawlenty in 2009, and we led the fight to defeat efforts to repeal the MRCCA statute in 2011. Your veto of that repeal was, needless to say, a critical milestone in this nearly ten-year effort to adopt the rule.

In 2013, after the DNR's authority had expired, FMR championed new legislation reauthorizing and funding MRCCA rulemaking. This effort, led by Senator Katie Sieben and Representative Rick Hansen, finally succeeded, and with your signature the rulemaking process was able to move forward again.

I want to make special note of the exceptional job that we believe your team at the DNR did with the development of the rule. The beginning of this process was marked by controversy and widely disparate positions from a variety of stakeholders. DNR staff made stakeholder engagement, active listening and humility their watchwords, and were able to do what many thought impossible—develop rules that most stakeholders emphatically support. FMR did not have all of our positions and recommendations adopted in the rule, and on several points we believe the rule should have been stronger. But we do feel that our comments and concerns were seriously considered and many of our top issues were addressed. We are grateful to

Commissioner Landwehr, Jenny Shillcox, Dan Petrik, Suzanne Rhees and Sherry Enzler for their excellent work and dedication.

At the conclusion of the administrative hearing portion of the rulemaking, Judge Eric Lipman made a finding that, if upheld, would have exempted some cities and many businesses from the rule, thereby weakening essential protections for the river. Your waiver of the Judge's finding cleared the way for consistent and effective application of the rule.

Finally, the inclusion in your budget of funding for local governments to help them implement the new rule is commendable. We believe this is a very fair-minded way to address concerns about the costs of complying with the rule, while supporting robust and necessary protections for our great river.

Governor, the Mississippi River is an ecological resource of global significance. It is a source of drinking water to over a million Minnesotans. It is a world-class scenic and recreational resource studded with historic and special places that give our communities a sense of place and make them more livable and attractive. We believe the Mississippi River Corridor Critical Area rule puts in place a flexible but robust framework for protection of this amazing treasure that will guide land use and development in the corridor for the next generation and beyond.

Please accept our deepest gratitude for all you and your administration have done to bring the MRCCA rule into being.

Yours very sincerely,



Whitney L. Clark
Executive Director

c:

Lt. Governor Tina Smith
DNR Commissioner Tom Landwehr
MNRRA Superintendent John Anfinson
Senator Katie Sieben
Representative Rick Hansen