



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

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To: House Health and Human Services Finance Division

Re: The Safe Drinking Water Fee (HF 1846)

Dear committee members,

On behalf of Friends of the Mississippi River and our members, I am writing to express our strong support for bipartisan legislation to increase Minnesota's Safe Drinking Water Fee (HF 1846).

Protecting our drinking water

We believe that everyone has a right to clean, safe drinking water no matter where they live. Safe and reliable drinking water is essential for public health, community prosperity and quality of life.

That is why the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) works closely with 7,000+ drinking water systems to test water, inspect water systems, and work with communities to solve critical drinking water problems.

The Safe Drinking Water Fee

This vital public health work is supported by Minnesota's Safe Drinking Water Fee. This modest annual fee (\$6.36 per connection) allows the MDH to provide cost-effective assistance that results in over 99% compliance with drinking water standards each year.

Unfortunately, this fee has not been adjusted since it was set in 2005. Since then, the demands on this fee have increased substantially:

- Inflation has increased by 28%, eroding the buying power of fee revenue;
- Our aging water infrastructure has become more costly to maintain; and
- New drinking water contaminants such as pharmaceuticals, personal care products, and cyanobacteria have emerged as threats to safe and reliable public water supplies.

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The MDH has temporarily made up for this funding shortfall by tapping resources from the U.S. EPA's Drinking Water Revolving Fund. However, this is not a sustainable solution, as those resources are needed for community infrastructure improvements.

Without additional funding, the MDH will have to reduce services, leaving local public water systems with a greater burden of testing and reduced technical assistance.


This may leave Minnesotans exposed to drinking water contaminants for longer periods of time, especially in smaller systems where the local tax base provides fewer resources for testing, investigations, and physical improvements.

Increasing the Safe Drinking Water Fee

HF 1846 increases the Safe Drinking Water Fee from \$6.36 to \$9.72 per connection. This modest fee increase (less than a penny a day) will provide the resources the MDH needs to continue to track contaminants and intervene to protect public health.

We urge you to support HF 1846 to increase Minnesota's Safe Drinking Water Fee this legislative session.

Sincerely,



Whitney L. Clark
Executive Director
Friends of the Mississippi River