



## MEMORANDUM

Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

**Date:** September 6, 2023  
**To:** CLFLWD Board of Managers  
**From:** Mike Kinney, District Administrator  
**Subject:** MN Watersheds Resolution – Expanding Watershed Districts



**District Wide**

### Background/Discussion

The purpose of this agenda item is for the Board to review the resolution drafted in partnership by Manager Bakke and legal counsel regarding the expansion of watershed districts in Minnesota, titled “Watershed Districts for all Minnesota Lakes, Rivers, and Wetlands”. The Board will decide if they support the resolution and support submitting it to Minnesota Watersheds.

Possible resolutions to bring to the Minnesota Watersheds were discussed at the July 27<sup>th</sup> and August 10<sup>th</sup> regular board meeting. Managers discussed multiple ideas including:

1. Regional salary survey and other state-wide services through MN Watersheds
2. Statewide watershed district representation

Examples of resolutions previously presented to Minnesota Watersheds were emailed to the managers. Managers consented to have Manager Bakke move forward with the assistance of Counsel Holtman to finalize a resolution regarding statewide watershed district representation.

### Recommended Motion

Manager \_\_\_\_\_ moves to approve support of the proposed resolution as reviewed by Manager Bakke and Mr Holtman and submit the resolution to the Minnesota Watersheds Board. Seconded by Manager \_\_\_\_\_.

### Attachment:

Proposed 2023 Minnesota Watersheds Resolution: 1 Information document and resolution titled: *Minnesota Watersheds Education and Outreach to Encourage Formation of Watershed Districts in Unserved Areas*

## **Background Information**

### **2023 Minnesota Watersheds Resolution**

Proposing Watershed: Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

Contact Names: Dave Bakke, Manager; Jackie Anderson, Manager

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Resolution Title: Watershed Districts for all Minnesota Lakes, Rivers, and Wetlands

#### **Background:**

Not all areas of Minnesota have a watershed district to support protection and improvement of lakes, rivers and wetlands and other water issues unique to those areas. “The watershed approach is now the national model and new hope for effective management of water resources” (Minnesota Watersheds website). Therefore, this resolution is to increase the number of local watershed districts to serve those areas of the state that lack support. In addition, with the increasing role being played by One Watershed-One Plan organizations throughout the State, it is important that each such entity include one or more watershed districts to advocate for and guide toward a watershed approach. The goal is to have all areas of Minnesota served by a local watershed district to advance responsible watershed-based management both locally and within One Watershed-One Plan organizations regionally.

#### **Ideas for how this issue could be solved:**

Minnesota Statutes 103D provides for the establishment of local watershed districts through petitioning by counties, municipalities, or citizens. Through various channels, (state government, counties, cities, lake associations, etc.) Minnesota Watersheds could provide outreach and education to promote and establish new watershed districts across Minnesota where they currently do not exist.

#### **Efforts to solve the problem:**

Members of our board of managers, past and present, have served as officers of lake associations and other local water management organizations. In that capacity, we have experienced the tremendous support of the Comfort Lake Forest Lake Watershed District in leading efforts to improve and protect our lakes, rivers and wetlands. Recently, one of our managers joined the Elbow Lake Association, near Lake Vermillion, and found that no watershed district exists to provide the same support needed to protect and improve lakes, rivers and wetlands in NE Minnesota. At a recent Elbow Lake Association meeting, the manager was charged with finding avenues of support for protecting and improving area water and reached out to the CLFLWD board to gather support for this effort to increase the number of watershed districts in Minnesota. This resolution is offered to broaden support for this effort.

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**Anticipated support or opposition:**

The legislature has endorsed watershed-based water resource management as state policy (103A.212). Minnesota Watersheds should expect support from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources and other state agencies concerned with sound water resource management. It would be hoped that counties and conservation districts would welcome One Watershed One Plan organization members that would bring a specific watershed focus to bear. Some counties or others may not favor the formation of additional watershed districts on the grounds that they would dilute county authority within One Watershed One Plan organizations, or on grounds of general opposition to the creation of additional taxing authorities.

This issue:

Applies only to our district

Requires legislative action

Applies only to 1 or 2 regions

Requires state agency advocacy (possibly)

Applies to the entire state

Impacts MN Watershed bylaws or MOPP

## **2023 MAWD Resolution**

### ***Minnesota Watersheds Education and Outreach to Encourage Formation of Watershed Districts in Unserved Areas***

**WHEREAS** as set forth at Minnesota Statutes §103A.212, the Minnesota legislature has enunciated watershed-based water resource management to be state policy;

**WHEREAS** many areas of the State of Minnesota do not lie within the boundaries of a watershed district or other watershed-based water management agency;

**WHEREAS** Minnesota Statutes §103D.205 provides for watershed districts to be established by petition of counties, municipalities or residents;

**WHEREAS** watershed districts operate on sound watershed-based science to set goals, priorities and implementation plans, and have proven to be responsive to local water resource priorities and needs; and

**WHEREAS** as One Watershed – One Plan organizations proliferate at a larger watershed scale, it is essential for such organizations to have as members watershed districts that can advocate for and guide toward a watershed approach;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds, in consultation with its membership, will develop a framework for education and outreach intended to encourage petition and advocacy for the formation of watershed districts in areas of the State not presently served by watershed-based public agencies.