

On the Waterfront

Governor's Clean Water Cabinet

Clean Water Cabinet Meeting

May 17, 2006

Attendance/members: Sheryl Corrigan, chair; Tom Weaver **Staff:** Joe Martin, Paul Burns and Barbara Weisman, Agriculture; Steve Woods, BWSR; Craig Engwall, Kent Lokkesmoe and Jim Japs, DNR; John Linc Stine, Health; Keith Buttleman, Met Council; John Wells, EQB

Key issues discussed

- Farm Bill Recommendations
- Water Supply Issues

Draft Farm Bill Recommendations

The Clean Water Cabinet is nearing the end of a months-long effort to craft recommendations to USDA and Congress on the nation's next Farm Bill. Engaging stakeholders has been a key part of the cabinet's process. The draft recommendations – to be posted in the next week on the CWC home page – evolved from the Governor's clean water vision and three guiding principles that the cabinet adopted earlier this year (see <http://cwc.state.mn.us/documents/Guiding%20Principles%2012-23-05.pdf>).

Perhaps the key element from the Governor's vision is the call to keep working lands working. To help meet this goal, the cabinet makes the case for a Farm Bill that strengthens the economic viability of farming, facilitates state and local efforts to address environmental priorities, and implements long-term conservation plans.

The draft recommendations cover the major areas of technical assistance, conservation planning, financial incentives, results-oriented accountability, strategic targeting, flexibility and transparency.

The plan is to give people the first two weeks in June to comment on the package before the cabinet considers its initial approval on the 21st. The cabinet will adopt a final letter and package of recommendations at its July meeting.

Developing a State Water Supply Policy

The Clean Water Cabinet has asked its Water Resources Leadership Group to help develop a water supply policy statement similar to the one the cabinet adopted on wetlands. The goal is a statement that ties together the various elements of law currently spread throughout *Minnesota Statutes*. The statement will help people understand state policy at a glance and ensure that state partners efficiently address the potential competition for scarce water resources within and outside of Minnesota.

For background information on the sustainability of Minnesota's water supplies, see the 2000 report, *Minnesota's Water Supply: Natural Conditions and Human Impacts*, at: http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/publications/waters/mn_water_supply.pdf and the 2005 package of papers on ground water sustainability at http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/waters/groundwater_section/sustainability/index.html.

Updates

- *Clean Water Legacy*: The Legislature adopted the Clean Water Legacy Act to provide the authority, direction and funding needed to achieve and maintain water quality standards according to section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act. The Legislature appropriated \$15 million from the General Fund and \$9.95 million in bonding to begin implementation of the Act. The House Research summary of the Clean Water Legacy Act is posted at <http://ww3.house.state.mn.us/hrd/bs/84/SF0762.html>. A summary of the initial funding the Legislature appropriated is attached.
- *Constitutional amendment*: The House and Senate were not able to reach agreement on a constitutional amendment to set aside a portion of the sales tax for *Legacy* and other initiatives.
- *Water quality rule 7050*: PCA and partners are working to pin down the meaning of references in the water quality rule designed to limit "significant adverse impacts" to wetlands. The goal is to proceed on a parallel path with the changes BWSR and partners are considering to the Wetland Conservation Act, with a proposal to WCA stakeholders in September.
- *Wetlands Summit report*: The Izaak Walton League has released its report of the February 4 wetlands summit. The full report is attached.
- *A cabinet retrospective*: The cabinet will be taking a look at its accomplishments as a first step in considering how it might better guide state water efforts. The lessons learned about what's worked and what hasn't will inform the changes needed to improve its effectiveness. One thing that has always been clear is the value of collaboration.