

May 14, 2026

Re: Open Letter to Minnesota Legislative Leaders and Governor Walz

Dear Speaker Lisa Demuth, Leader Zack Stephenson, Senate Majority Leader Erin Murphy, Senate Republican Leader Mark Johnson, Governor Tim Walz:

We are writing as the leaders of Minnesota's conservation community with a simple message: pass the Outdoor Heritage Fund bill before the legislative session adjourns on May 18.

Since Minnesota voters approved the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment in 2008, the Legislature has never failed to pass an Outdoor Heritage Fund appropriations bill. That record of bipartisan action is in jeopardy, not because Minnesotans have stopped supporting it and not because the funding isn't needed. It is stalled over a governance dispute.

We are asking you to set that dispute aside and get this bill passed.

The \$191 million package funds land protection, wetland restoration, prairie and forest habitat, fish and wildlife habitat, and public access across the state. It supports local jobs, outdoor recreation, and the working landscapes that define Minnesota. This program is a national model, one that voters and legislators from both parties have championed for nearly two decades.

We are not asking you to resolve every disagreement. We are asking you to put to work the constitutionally dedicated funding that Minnesotans approved at the ballot box to get conservation done on the ground for communities, landowners, hunters, anglers, and all Minnesotans who care about our outdoors natural resources.

The clock is running out. There is still time to act. We urge you to do so.

Respectfully,

Audubon Upper Mississippi River
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
The Conservation Fund
Conservation Minnesota
Ducks Unlimited
Fergus Falls Fish and Game Club
Friends of the Mississippi River
Fox Lake Conservation League, Inc.
Great River Greening
Izaak Walton League - Minnesota Chapter
Minnesota Deer Hunters Association
Minnesota Environmental Partnership
Minnesota Land Trust

Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society
Minnesota Trout Unlimited
Minnesota Valley Trust
Minnesota Wildlife Federation
National Wild Turkey Federation
Pheasants Forever
Ruffed Grouse Society
The Nature Conservancy MN/ND/SD
Trout Unlimited
Trust for Public Land
Viking Sportsmen Club