







A Great Session for the Environment!

How'd we do?	
	<p>Clean Energy Minnesota</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewable Electricity Standard – Minnesota created the most aggressive standard in the country, which will ensure that approximately 25 percent of our state's electricity comes from renewable sources by 2020. • Global Warming Solutions – Minnesota now has the goal of reducing global warming pollution 80 percent by 2050. In addition, an emission reductions action plan is due to the legislature by February and a program to reduce power plant emissions must begin by August 1, 2009. • Energy Efficiency – By setting a goal of reducing demand by 1.5 percent each year, Minnesota should see a 25 percent reduction in electrical and natural gas use by 2025. • Biofuels – The legislature failed to support several provisions that would promote cellulosic sources of bioenergy. However, a new state-wide working lands bioenergy program, Reinvest in Minnesota - Clean Energy, was established. In addition, funding was provided for landscape-scale perennial biomass research and monitoring and a portion of the state Renewable Fuels Standard was dedicated to cellulosic sources.
	<p>Clean Water Legacy</p> <p>Efforts to restore and protect Minnesota's lakes, rivers and streams came up a bit dry this year. The legislature provided just one-quarter of the money needed to create cleanup plans for the water known to be polluted and to test the over 80 percent of lakes and rivers yet to be analyzed. The legislature did provide modest nonpoint restoration funds, including \$1.5 million for a project to demonstrate how sustainable agricultural practices can help clean up an impaired watershed. Legislators laid the groundwork for a supplemental budget request for 2009.</p>
	<p>Legacy Amendment</p> <p>Legislation to give voters a chance in 2008 to create a long-term, dedicated source of funding for water, wildlife, parklands and natural areas fell just short this year. A conference committee finalized language, but the bill did not receive a final vote. The conference committee report can be taken up when they next reconvene. The constitutional amendment, if approved, would raise the state's sales tax 3/8th of one percent with the proceeds dedicated to clean water, wildlife habitat, land protection and parklands, as well as arts and culture.</p>
	<p>Great Lakes and Saint Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact</p> <p>Minnesota became the first state in the region to endorse the Great Lakes Compact. Once approved by each of the eight Great Lakes states and Congress, the Compact will provide uniform protection for new or expanding water usage within the basin.</p>

Minnesota's Great Outdoors

Enjoy it. Protect it. Pass it on.

www.ProtectOurGreatOutdoors.org

Additional Environmental Victories in 2007

Electronics Recycling – Electronics contain toxins that are not allowed to be disposed of in landfills. Legislation passed in April creates a recycling program that requires manufactures to recycle a certain weight of electronics waste in proportion to the weight of new equipment sold each year, which also creates an incentive for manufactures to use fewer heavy, toxic materials. For more information, contact Sara Rummel with Clean Water Action at 612.623.3666 and www.cleanwater.org.

Environmental Health Tracking and Biomonitoring – Biomonitoring and health tracking programs will be developed to help identify the connections between exposure to hazardous substances and diseases. Bio-monitoring allows the Health Department to ask for volunteers in target areas to be checked for specific chemicals and elements in their bodies. For more information, contact Samuel Yamin with Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy at 651.223.5969 and www.mncenter.org.

Green Fleet School Buses – Approximately 4,000 school buses will be eligible for retrofitting with pollution control technology as part of Project Green Fleet and a \$2.4 million allocation contained in the environment finance bill. More information is available from Minnesota Environmental Institute at 612.334.3388 and www.mn-ei.org.

Invasive Species – A new invasive species fund was created for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to dedicate future surcharge revenues toward both terrestrial and aquatic invasive species management on state-administered land. Approximately \$2 million more per year was appropriated to the DNR Division of Ecological Services for these purposes. In addition, the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) received \$300,000 per year in new funds to begin local cooperative weed management programs with the intent of managing invasive species and restoring native plants. For more information, contact Erik Wrede with The Nature Conservancy at (612) 331-0778 or ewrede@tnc.org.

LCCMR Allocations – Almost \$23 million was allocated from the Environmental Trust Fund for a wide variety of projects, on the recommendations of the Legislative-Citizens Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR). Funds were allocated for forest and habitat conservation, parklands protections, water quality research, and other projects. For more information, contact Cordelia Pierson with Trust for Public Land at 651.917.2240 and www.tpl.org.

Mercury Products Phase Out – This is a comprehensive bill that bans the sale and use of mercury-containing products for which there are safer, readily-available alternatives. It also prohibits the use of mercury products in k-12 schools and increases labeling and recycling requirements for products without a viable mercury-free alternative, such as fluorescent lamps. More information is available from Carin Skoog with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy at 612.870.3458 or www.healthlegacy.org.

Shoreline Protections – Action this year protects the rights of local communities to require environmental improvements when allowing resorts to upgrade facilities. In addition, \$1 million was allocated to the Department of Natural Resources to update the outdated shoreland management standards to address rapid development along our lakes and rivers, especially on shallow lakes and sensitive shorelines. For more information, contact Allison Wolf with Minnesota Center for Environmental advocacy at 651.223.5969 and www.mncenter.org.

Toxic Flame Retardant Phase Out – This bill bans the sale and use of products containing two forms of toxic flame retardants known as penta- and octa-BDE, and instead requires safer substitutes. It also requires the agency to do a study of a third highly toxic form, deca-BDE, by January 2008. In addition, it prohibits government agencies from purchasing products containing any of these toxic flame retardants. More information is available from Kathleen Schuler with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy at 612.870.3468 or www.healthlegacy.org.

Wetlands Protection – The Wetlands Conservation Act has been modestly strengthened for the first time since its creation 16 years ago. Several exemptions to the act have been tightened and the use of exemptions will be better tracked. For more information, contact Brian Pasko with the Sierra Club at 612.659.9124 or Janette Brimmer with Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy at 651.223.5969.

Wild Rice Protection – The Department of Natural Resources will prepare a report on threats to natural wild rice in Minnesota, including development, non-native invasive species and genetically modified organisms. The report will also include recommendations on protecting and increasing natural wild rice stands. Additionally, an environmental impact statement will be required before anyone is allowed to plant genetically modified wild rice. For more information, contact White Earth Land Recovery Project at 218.375.2600 and www.welrp.org.