



Item 5C.
BCWMC 1-16-20

Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

January 16, 2020

Emily Javens
MN Association of Watershed Districts
595 Aldine Street
Saint Paul, MN 55104

RE: MAWD Leadership Requested on Chloride Limited Liability Legislation in 2020

Dear Emily,

The Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (BCWMC) is facing an unprecedented water quality challenge: chloride pollution. With excellent success we have been working for decades at reducing the amount nutrients, solids, and other pollutants in our lakes and streams so they can remain or become swimmable and fishable. We have the knowledge and tools to improve waters degraded by these pollutants.

As a permanent pollutant, chloride is a different story altogether. It is toxic to aquatic life and there is no viable way to remove chloride from our waters. Chloride levels in our lakes and streams continue to increase. It's only a matter of time before these waters will no longer be able to harbor freshwater species.

In the BCWMC area, we know most of the chloride in our water comes from winter deicers and that the only way to tackle this problem is through significant reduction in the amount of deicer used on roads, parking lots, and sidewalks. While the BCWMC is working on a variety of fronts (including educating residents, training winter maintenance staff, and encouraging (and sometimes requiring) chloride management plans), there is action required at a State level.

At the Minnesota Legislature last year, MAWD officially supported the legislative effort to "provide limited liability protection to certified commercial salt applicators." However, because the effort was being led by the Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Association (MNLA) and the Stop Over Salting citizen group, it was not a legislative priority for MAWD. It's our understanding that the MNLA will not lead this effort at the Capitol again this year, and that the issue remains on MAWD's list of legislative issues.

In the absence of a strong champion, the legislation is likely to stall yet again. Therefore, the BCWMC asks that MAWD take a leadership role in supporting and actively advocating for this legislation at the Capitol in 2020. This is an important issue not only for the Twin Cities Metro Area, but throughout the state wherever salt is applied, and snowmelt rushes into our lakes, streams, and wetlands. MAWD is the perfect organization to address this issue and is well poised to lead the way.

Thank you for your support and consideration.
Sincerely,

Jim Prom, Chair