



**Dedicated to a Strong Greater Minnesota**

**For Immediate Release**  
February 26, 2018

Contact: Julie Liew  
651-259-1917  
[jlliew@flaherty-hood.com](mailto:jlliew@flaherty-hood.com)

## **Water infrastructure funding bill bolstered by strong bipartisan support**

*Bill would allocate \$167M to state grant & loans programs that help cities pay for critical water infrastructure projects*

ST. PAUL—City leaders in Greater Minnesota are lauding legislation introduced today that would boost state funding for grant and loan programs that help cities pay for expensive wastewater and drinking water infrastructure projects.

The bill, [SF 2668/HF 3122](#), spearheaded by chief authors Sen. Gary Dahms (R-Redwood Falls) and Rep. Dean Urdahl (R-Grove City), allocates \$167 million in state bonding for three key grant and loan programs administered by the Public Facilities Authority (PFA). The proposal has broad bipartisan support, with a wide mix of legislators from both parties and from every corner of the state signed on as co-authors of the legislation. Gov. Mark Dayton has also shown support for the plan by including it in his bonding proposal and touting it again at a Governor’s press conference last week.

“We’re really thankful to have a strong, bipartisan group of lawmakers come together to support legislation that provides funding for water infrastructure,” said Dave Smiglewski, mayor of Granite Falls and president of the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities (CGMC). “This is a critical need for communities across the state. Every Minnesotan deserves access to clean water, but cities can’t afford to bear the high construction and technology costs alone.”

The CGMC, which is comprised of 96 cities outside the metro area, has determined that funding for the PFA grant and loan programs is its top bonding bill priority this session.

“Cities have no choice but to upgrade their water facilities and fix broken sewer pipes. Unless they get financial help from the state, these costs all fall on local residents and businesses,” Smiglewski said. “When citizens are hit with water bills that have doubled or tripled, it really puts a strain on the whole community.”

Due to the need to replace aging infrastructure and comply with new, stricter water-quality regulations, the number of cities and sanitary sewer districts currently planning to rebuild or upgrade their drinking water or wastewater infrastructure has jumped in recent years. More than 300 cities, the bulk of which are in Greater Minnesota, currently have projects on the PFA’s Project Priority List which identifies potential wastewater, drinking water and storm water projects that are eligible to receive funding through PFA programs. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has estimated that local governments and the state are facing \$5 billion in wastewater infrastructure costs over the next 20 years, while the Minnesota

Department of Health estimates it will cost an additional \$7.4 billion to upgrade and repair drinking water infrastructure over that same time period.

The legislation introduced today, SF 2668/HF 3122, has not yet been scheduled for a hearing. However, the House Capital Investment Committee will hold an informational hearing on Wednesday to learn more about the state's water infrastructure needs and costs. City officials from at least two Greater Minnesota cities, Pipestone and Little Falls, are expected to testify about the specific needs facing their communities.

“We are glad that legislators are listening to our concerns and taking steps toward getting more funding for these important projects,” Smiglewski said. “I hope this spirit of bipartisanship will continue and lead to the passage of a bonding bill this year. These projects and our communities can't wait.”

For more information on this bonding bill proposal and why it is important to Greater Minnesota communities, please see this [CGMC Info Sheet](#).

###

*The Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization representing 96 cities outside of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. The Coalition educates legislators about issues important to Greater Minnesota. Visit the CGMC online at [greatermncities.org](http://greatermncities.org) and follow us on Twitter [@greatermncities](https://twitter.com/greatermncities).*