

January 19, 2012

The Honorable Bill Ingebrigtsen, Chair
Senate Environment and Natural
Resources Committee
303 State Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Denny McNamara, Chair
House Environment, Energy, & Natural
Resources Policy and Finance Committee
375 State Office Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Senator Ingebrigtsen and Representative McNamara:

Attached is a report, required by Laws of Minnesota 2011, Chapter 107, Section 106, on the long-term funding needed to implement and enforce a statewide aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention program. As required, this report also includes recommendations on watercraft surcharges necessary to fund the program.

There are several options for a statewide AIS prevention program outlined in this report and the watercraft surcharges estimated to fund these options are substantially higher than the \$5.00 surcharge that has been in place since 1993. Current revenues deposited into the Invasive Species Account are less than current appropriation levels. Consequently, the Invasive Species Account has a structural deficit and will go negative in the future. Without other funding sources, an additional \$7,000,000 per year will be needed to fund the program at current levels after FY13. This report summarizes funding requirements needed to sustain a current level of effort for AIS prevention, management, and enforcement as well as funding required to significantly increase prevention strategies.

Department of Natural Resources staff would be glad to answer any questions you may have about the report and to attend a future committee hearing to present key points from the report if desired.

Sincerely,

Tom Landwehr
Commissioner

c: Bob Meier, Assistant Commissioner
Steve Hirsch, Director, Division of Ecological and Water Resources
Luke Skinner, Supervisor, Invasive Species Program