

2020 Legislative Session Update

May 29, 2020

The 2020 Legislature adjourned on May 18, and bills were sent to Governor Walz for signature/veto. Several bills were not concluded.

What makes this year unique is that the COVID-19 pandemic and peacetime emergency extension (requiring renewal every 30 days) means the Governor may call the legislature back on June 12. If that happens, we anticipate legislature will continue work on some bills.

Here's where we are:

Outdoor Heritage Fund + other legacy fund provisions *HF2682*

On May 27, Governor Walz signed this bill into law. Previously, the legislature passed identical bills with strong support in both houses (House 110-21; Senate 67-0). The law includes a 14.8% reduction to each OHF project due to the revised budget projections on the sales tax. BWSR-related projects include:

RIM Reserve Grasslands Phase II	\$ 3.233 million
Lower Wild Rice Corridor Habitat Restoration	\$ 1.740 million
Camp Ripley ACUB Phase VII	\$ 2.712 million
Pine and Leech Watershed Phase I	\$ 2.458 million
Mississippi Headwaters Habitat Corridor Phase IV	\$ 1.518 million

This law also contains: 1) a retroactive extension for the RIM Wetlands Phase VII project - critical because it allows BWSR to leverage federal funds for the MN CREP; and 2) an extension of one year for Outdoor Heritage Fund, Clean Water Fund and Parks and Trails Fund projects that would otherwise lapse, cancel, or expire on June 30, 2020.

Clean Water Fund

Agencies were asked to provide MMB proposed reduction scenarios for the Clean Water Fund. The legislature did not take up these reductions in a bill, so we will be working with the Administration on next steps for appropriation reduction amounts and processes.

Environment Omnibus Bill *HF4554 and SF4499*

No final bill reconciled. The House and Senate each passed different versions of this bill, but those bills were not reconciled. Both bills included (different) versions of the LCCMR Environmental and Natural

Resources Trust Fund, along with policy provisions for the DNR, PCA, and BWSR. We had just a couple policy and budget-neutral items, including requests for time extensions to our current work and extensions for land use authorities during the pandemic.

Capital Investment Bill *HF2529 and SF3463*

Bills failed on both House and Senate Floor. Bonding Bills require a 3/5th majority to pass and neither the House nor Senate were able to get enough votes to reach this threshold. Those bills included the following BWSR appropriations:

	Gov Rec	House	Senate
MN CREP	\$16.5 million	\$12.5 million	\$ 1 million
Local Roads Wetlands	\$26.4 million	\$15.0 million	\$18 million
Local Roads Wetlands (cash)	\$ 8.0 million	\$ 8.0 million	\$ 0
Total	\$50.9 million	\$35.5 million	\$19 million

Moving Forward

We know these resources are critical for conservation project work, provides and maintains jobs in local communities, and are necessary to receive federal match. BWSR and our partners continue to work together on priorities for a special session June and for the next legislative session in 2021.