

Draft Charge to the Water Policy Study Committee

Current water quality issues combined with projected population growth and increasing demand for water are creating concerns about the future of water quality and supply in Minnesota. Exurbanization has more than doubled the population of shoreline houses, and there is a widespread sense of declining quality of lake environments. Growth (and energy production) has also stressed groundwater resources.

Water is a fluid resource, flowing across multiple jurisdictions and used by people for everything from drinking to manufacturing. Yet our approach to managing this vital resource is fragmented and disconnected from the ways that people think about and use water. There is no comprehensive approach to water policy in Minnesota. Consequently, our tendency is to react to water-related problems after they have been identified with restrictions and mandates, which often meet resistance from water users.

In order to effectively manage our water resources, the Citizens League Water Policy Study Committee is charged with answering the following questions:

1. What are the appropriate roles and responsibilities of individuals, communities, businesses, nonprofits, and the various units of government that manage water in Minnesota?
2. Based on those roles and responsibilities, what core principles should guide collaborative water use and management in Minnesota?

As it answers these questions, the committee may also consider particular policy issues of concern to Minnesota, including but not limited to:

- Impaired waters
- Water quality
- Sustainable water usage and water conservation
- Lake management, including shoreline zoning, docks, fishing, aquatic plant management, invasive species, and septic systems
- Urban stormwater
- Non-point source pollution