

April 3, 2013

Dear Chairwoman Representative Kahn and Members of the House Legacy Committee,

I am writing on behalf of 38,000 Ducks Unlimited members in Minnesota regarding the Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF). While many of our members live and work in the greater Twin Cities metropolitan area, many others reside in cities and rural areas throughout the state. Regardless of where they live, work, and recreate, they joined Ducks Unlimited in support our science-based wetlands and waterfowl conservation mission. In Minnesota, this mission is delivered through our “Living Lakes” conservation initiative.

Since passage of the Legacy Amendment by Minnesota voters in 2008, Ducks Unlimited has greatly appreciated our funding partnership with the Legislature to accelerate implementation of our Living Lakes conservation initiative in Minnesota to enhance, restore, and protect shallow lakes and prairie wetlands through grants Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) grants recommended by the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC). We look forward to 20 or more years of successfully investing these public tax dollars in solid, science-based conservation work that benefits wetlands, waterfowl and other wildlife, and the public alike. This work benefits all Minnesotans.

With that in mind, I write to you now on behalf of DU to formally go on record in support of the annual LSOHC public proposal review and recommendation process. Specifically, DU strongly supports the full 2013 OHF appropriation recommendation, including the recommendations made by the LSOHC on March 18, 2013, and the maintenance of an annual appropriation process for the OHF. We strongly recommend and request that House OHF appropriation bill (H.F. 207) authored by Representative Lillie be amended to reflect the most current recommendations from LSOHC for 2013 OHF appropriations, and that the bill be amended back to a one-year appropriations bill for 2013 (FY14) funding only as has been recommended by the LSOHC since the Legacy Amendment was passed by Minnesota voters in 2008.

Further, we do not support the recent amending of the 2013 OHF appropriations bill to include additional projects that were not publically solicited, reviewed, and vetted through the citizen and legislative LSOHC process as we believe the voters who approved the Legacy Amendment expect and desire. DU fully supports and believes in the annual public LSOHC review and recommendation process that occurs over a period of six months or more. Ducks Unlimited and our conservation partners comprised of other conservation organizations and state and federal agencies have used the well-publicized LSOHC schedule for 2013 and anticipate developing new 2014 OHF funding proposals this spring for public review by LSOHC this summer.

We firmly believe that it is critical to our collective conservation work in Minnesota that OHF proposals from Ducks Unlimited and all others go through the well-established and proven LSOHC public review process to help ensure OHF funds are successfully invested in projects that produce meaningful and lasting conservation results, as mandated by the voters of Minnesota. Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,



Tim Roble  
State Chairman – Minnesota  
Ducks Unlimited