



INSTITUTE FOR JUSTICE

Please find attached to this letter a copy of a report recently commissioned by the Institute for Justice regarding the Roseau Lake Project.

The report was commissioned at the request of the Roseau County Landowners Coalition, primarily as an alternative to the lack of meaningful stakeholder engagement during the planning and implementation of the Roseau Lake Project. Having found that the Roseau River Watershed District and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources regularly fail to seriously consider the objections to the project by landowners, farmers, and residents who live and work in and around the project footprint, the Coalition requested an objective third party review of the project's modeling and the most recent version of the Operating Plan publicly available.

The findings of the report validate concerns the Coalition has raised for years.

First, the engineering firm performing the report found clear errors in the modeling:

From the engineer's report: *"the model gives conveyance ratio warnings and error messages indicative that the cross-sections may be spaced too far apart in several reaches, which could lead to possible inaccuracies in the model results and possible model flow instability in some reaches."*

Some of these errors demonstrate how little care has been taken with the project's analysis: *"...during the review it was noted that input parameters for one of the storage areas appears to be incorrect. The SE_Spillover2 elevation-storage volume input data appears to have been copied from the SE_Spillover storage data, and not changed to the correct area-storage curve," and "the impact of this discrepancy could be quite significant and lead to model results that do not accurately represent present or proposed conditions."* (Voigt Consultants Report, p. 2)

Second, the models used for this assessment were made available to the Coalition via IJ's public records request fulfilled in July of 2022, but turned out to be based on "Alternative 2A", the Roseau Lake Project's original preferred alternative, not "Alternative 1," the current iteration of the project. Alternative 2A was abandoned by the RRWD and DNR during the Environmental Assessment Worksheet process (January 6, 2021).

This means either that the RRWD failed to appropriately respond to IJ's request under the Data Practices Act by providing modeling that was not representative of the current project, or that the RRWD and DNR had not actually completed modeling for their current preferred project version.

The first possibility would be a gross abuse of the public's trust, and a disregard for the wording of the Data Records Act request filed to obtain the models, while the second possibility would



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demonstrate significant negligence on the part of the project proposers who, after years of hearing concerns from the public about risks from the project, may still not have completed any meaningful hydrological modeling and analysis of their actual project plan.

The Roseau County Landowners Coalition continues to call on the RRWD and DNR to abandon the project, and instead focus its efforts and limited resources on true flood mitigation efforts alongside stakeholders who understand the needs of farmers in and around the Roseau Lake basin.