



Friends of Minnesota Scientific & Natural Areas

April 20, 2020

Representative Rick Hansen, Chair
House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division

VIA E-MAIL ONLY
Peter.Strohmeier@house.mn

Re: HF 4498 - Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund
Scientific and Natural Areas (SNA) Program – Page 19, lines 19.16 to 19.27; and pages 37-38 lines, 37.30 to 38.19
Hearing Date: Tuesday, April 21, 2020 (12:30 p.m.)

Dear Representative Hansen and Committee Members:

Friends of Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas (FMSNA) is a Minnesota non-profit, tax-exempt [“501(c)(3)”] corporation whose mission is to advocate for the protection, management, and perpetuation of Minnesota’s 168 Scientific and Natural Areas (SNAs).

Support Funding of Scientific and Natural Areas

On behalf of FMSNA, I offer this letter in **support of the funding for the Scientific and Natural Areas (SNA) Program**, as contained in HF 4498, page 19, lines 19.16 to 19.37; and pages 37-39, lines 37.30 to 38.19.

This bill provides balanced, three-part funding for habitat restoration and improvements; increasing public involvement; and strategic acquisition. The SNA Program has been continuously underfunded. This bill, if approved, will help to fill the funding gap, to the extent it supplements – and is not a substitute for – traditional funding through the general fund and bonding.

Trail Impacts – Please Amend Language

Minnesota Statute 86A.05, Subd. 5 states SNAs are established “... to protect and perpetuate in an undisturbed natural state those natural features which possess exceptional scientific or educational value.” SNAs are essential to protect areas of high biodiversity significance. We note in HF 4498, on lines 38.14 to 38.16, the following language:

“When feasible, consideration must be given to accommodate trails on lands acquired.”

*Rep. Rick Hansen, Chair
House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division
April 20, 2020*

We are concerned about the adverse impact of any type of trail on a Scientific and Natural Area. Therefore, we respectfully request the above sentence in the bill (lines 38.14 to 38.16) be amended to read:

“When feasible, consideration must be given to accommodate minimal impact walking trails for interpretive purposes on lands acquired.”

FMSNA looks forward to continuing to work together to support the SNA program, enhance our natural resources, and provide compatible educational and scientific opportunities for our citizens.

On behalf of FMSNA, I **thank you** in advance for your kind consideration. Please contact me any time, if you have questions or comments.

Very truly yours,



Thomas E. Casey
Board Chair
Friends of Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas, Inc.

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cc: MN Department of Natural Resources
Board of Directors