



Conservation Connection



A Minnesota Legislative Outdoor Newsletter: Created by Kim Scott and Alexandra David

**Sponsored by: Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Fergus Falls Fish and Game Club,
Fish Lake Conservation Club, Izaak Walton League, MN Musky and Pike Alliance,
MN Sharptail Grouse Society, Outdoor News, Pheasants Forever, Sportsmen for the BWCA***

May 16, 2025

Important Dates:

- May 19: Constitutional deadline for adjournment for the 2025 Legislative Session
- February 17, 2026: First day of the 2026 Legislative Session.

Minnesota lawmakers strike a deal on a two-year state budget: A special session needed to finish the work:

Minnesota would revoke health care for adult undocumented immigrants but allow children to remain covered under a [budget deal top lawmakers announced](#) Thursday. Gov. Tim Walz and leaders of the Minnesota House and Senate emerged from two weeks of closed door negotiations with a topline deal that also cuts \$283 million from the state budget over the next two years and makes progress on the state's looming deficit. The deal still needs approval from legislators. The GOP and DFL are tied in the Minnesota House. Democrats hold a one-seat advantage in the Senate . . . [The People of Color and Indigenous Caucus and other DFL legislators], outraged by the decision on undocumented residents, pounded on the door of the reception area within the governor's office during the news conference, chanting "Don't kill immigrants" and "Open the door." Security personnel held the doors closed as protestors tried to enter the news conference. Senate Majority Leader Erin Murphy, DFL-St. Paul, said she was not surprised by the demonstration as it's a "visceral and painful issue" for her caucus. [Read more.](#)

Budget Details: One of the key sticking points legislative leaders and the governor had to work through was whether and how to balance the budget in the next biennium. State budget officials earlier this year projected a \$6 billion deficit for 2028 and 2029. The deal announced Thursday erases much of that deficit, but doesn't eliminate it completely . . . [reducing] it by \$1.8 billion. Ahna Minge, the state budget director, said forecasts now suggest legislators will face just a \$290 million deficit when they tackle the 2028-29 budget again in the 2027 legislative session . . . But the relatively small \$290 million figure leaves out the projected impacts of inflation, which could push costs up and require deeper cuts. [Read more.](#)

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Legacy bill passes Senate 41-26: The Legacy Finance Bill proposes to allocate approximately \$776.9 million across four major funds established by the Legacy Amendment: the Outdoor Heritage Fund, Clean Water Fund, Parks and Trails Fund, and Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. The bill includes about \$162 million from the Outdoor Heritage Fund to protect key habitats, and roughly \$303 million from the Clean Water Fund, including funding directed toward addressing nitrate contamination in southern Minnesota, expanded water monitoring, private well testing, and long-term protection strategies. Around \$100 million is dedicated to the Parks and Trails Fund to support maintenance, accessibility, and enhancement of recreational areas throughout the state. [The Senate and House must still confer on the differences between their Legacy bills and adopt a final bill.]

See how the legislators voted:

Y ABELER	Y FRENTZ	Y KUPEC	Y PAPPAS
N ANDERSON	N GREEN	Y LANG	Y PHA
N BAHR	N GRUENHAGEN	Y LATZ	Y PORT
Y BOLDON	Y GUSTAFSON	N LIESKE	Y PRATT
Y CARLSON	Y HAUSCHILD	N LIMMER	Y PUTNAM
Y CHAMPION	Y HAWJ	N LUCERO	N RARICK
Y CLARK	N HEINTZEMAN	Y MANN	N RASMUSSEN
Y COLEMAN	Y HOFFMAN	Y MARTY	Y REST
Y CWODZINSKI	Y HOUSLEY	N MATHEWS	Y SEEBERGER
N DAHMS	N HOWE	Y MAYE QUADE	N UTKE
Y DIBBLE	N JASINSKI	Y MCEWEN	N WEBER
N DORNINK	N JOHNSON	Y MILLER	N WESENBERG
N DRAHEIM	Y JOHNSON STEWART	Y MITCHELL	Y WESTLIN
N DRAZKOWSKI	Y KLEIN	Y MOHAMED	N WESTROM
N DUCKWORTH	N KORAN	Y MURPHY	Y WIKLUND
N FARNSWORTH	N KREUN	Y NELSON	Y XIONG
Y FATEH	Y KUNESH	Y OUMOU VERBETEN	
HF 2563 HAWJ			
FINAL PASSAGE AS AMENDED		YEA 41	NAY 26

Several amendments were proposed by Senator Green but were ultimately not adopted. One [amendment](#) sought to limit how often entities could receive grants from the Legacy Funds, setting a three-year restriction and defining successor organizations to prevent circumvention. [Another](#), ruled not germane to the bill, proposed requiring county board approval for land purchases funded by the state if the acquisitions would reduce county tax revenue. A [third](#) aimed to mandate Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) agreements for any such land purchases. All three amendments failed to pass and were not included in the final version of the bill.

Conferees to the Legacy conference committee have been adopted: The Senate Legacy conferees are Senators Hawj, McEwen, Pha, Mohamed, and Pratt, and the House Conferees are Representatives Vang, Hussein, McDonald, and Skraba.

Select DNR News releases

- [Chicks have hatched on the DNR FalconCam](#): Four newly hatched chicks are now visible on the Minnesota DNR's popular FalconCam. The Nongame Wildlife Program's camera is in a nesting box in downtown St. Paul and will once again provide an intimate look at peregrine falcons raising their young.
- [Minnesota DNR invites public comment on muskie plan update](#): The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is inviting people to share their thoughts on a draft update of the state's long-range plan for muskellunge.
- [Extreme fire danger continues](#): The National Weather Service has issued a Red Flag Warning for 80 counties in Minnesota effective today, May 12, due to extreme fire risk conditions.

Last Week at the Legislature:

The Legislature did not have budget targets until Thursday, when legislative leaders reached an agreement, so the Environment, Legacy, and Agriculture conference committees did not meet this week.

Next Week at the Legislature:

The Chairs of each respective committee will likely meet behind closed doors to reconcile differences between the bills. Once an agreement is reached, a conference committee will be scheduled to vote on the agreement before a final vote in each respective body. The legislature will continue to meet over the weekend and must adjourn by Monday.

Bills Introductions of Interest:

Environment and Natural Resources:

Bipartisan Legislation:

Franson and Hansen, R. introduced: [H. F. 3322](#), A bill for an act relating to taxation; proposing a plastic bottle excise tax; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 297H. The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy.

Republican Legislation:

Myers introduced: [H. F. 3324](#), A bill for an act relating to environment; establishing a rebate program to replace time-based ion exchange water softeners with demand-based ion exchange water softeners; appropriating money. The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy.

DFL Legislation:

Senator Champion introduced--[S.F. No. 3516](#): A bill for an act relating to agriculture; modifying the scope of certain local plant pest control resolutions and ordinances; requiring the modification of certain existing ordinances; amending Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 18G.13, subdivision 7. Referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Veterans, Broadband, and Rural Development.

Senators Hauschild and McEwen introduced--[S.F. No. 3521](#): A bill for an act relating to economic development; appropriating money for grants to pay for staff to issue entry permits for the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. Referred to the Committee on Jobs and Economic Development.