



# Minnesota Rural Counties Legislative Policy 2019

## Broadband Development

MRC recognizes the availability of high-speed broadband access is necessary to participate in our current culture and economy, and that current service delivery is severely lacking or nonexistent in many areas of Greater Minnesota. Oct. 3, 2016

MRC supports making affordable broadband available to unserved areas a priority, and recognizes a critical need also exists in many underserved areas of the state. Oct. 3, 2016

MRC supports adequate funding to address concerns in both unserved and underserved areas of the state. Oct. 3, 2016

MRC supports identifying and implementing actions to achieve by 2020 the goal of statewide deployment of advanced broadband networks and symmetrical high-speed capacity. Oct. 3, 2016

MRC supports initiatives to make it easier for counties, cities, municipal utilities, schools, libraries, and other public sector entities to collaborate and deploy broadband infrastructure and services at the local and regional level. Oct. 3, 2016

MRC supports adequate funding for the Office of Broadband Development within the Department of Employment and Economic Development. Oct. 3, 2016

MRC supports continued funding for the Border-to-Border Broadband Development Fund. Oct. 3, 2016

## Economic Self-Sufficiency

MRC supports adequate funding to address statewide workforce housing needs. Feb. 25, 2014

## Energy

MRC recognizes that rural economies depend on a safe, reliable and affordable source of on-going energy to meet manufacturing and production needs. MRC supports energy initiatives that assist rural agriculture, manufacturing and economic development to compete successfully for market share, and opposes energy and economic development policies that impose inequitable cost or regulatory burdens which hinder the ability of rural businesses to compete in the marketplace.

Jan. 22, 2009

### **Transmission and Distribution**

MRC supports the use of nuclear power and coal as a means of gaining energy independence and maintaining a strong, reliable supply of power to the state.

Jan. 22, 2009

MRC supports elimination of the moratorium on the construction of new nuclear power plants in the state.

Jan. 20, 2009

## **Health and Human Services**

### **Child Safety and Well Being**

MRC supports federal funding enhancements to address growing demands for out of home placement needs.

Sept. 22, 1999

### **Health Care Financing, Access and Quality / New Health Care Delivery Systems & Health Care Homes**

MRC supports a combined treatment and correction center model.

Jan. 11, 2007

### **Children's and Family Health**

MRC recognizes the state is putting significant new focus on child protection services and supports adequate funding to staff those additional new county mandated requirements.

Oct. 3, 2016

### **Community Health**

MRC opposes as untenable, the cost shifts for Community Behavioral Health Hospitals imposed during the 2016 Legislative Session.

Oct. 3, 2016

### **Health Care Funding**

MRC supports maximization of federal reimbursements for state-mandated human services programs like MN Sure and Medical Insurance.

Oct. 3, 2016

MRC supports adequate funding and significant administrative simplification to carry out new state-imposed mandates imposed on counties and administrative simplification.

Oct. 3, 2016

## **County Administration and Management**

### **Intergovernmental Relations / District Courts**

MRC supports adequate funding of the court system.

Jan. 14, 2010

### **Intergovernmental Relations / State-County Administration"**

MRC supports the protection of local governments to make planning decisions based on local standards and local initiatives. This policy recognizes there are differences in the natural and demographic landscapes of the state. Further, the MRCC opposes state initiatives, implied or direct, that would force compliance by local governments with planning guidelines set by the state.

Aug. 26, 1998

MRC opposes implementation of statewide building codes.

Feb. 28, 2003

### **State-County Relations**

MRC supports outcome-based legislation.

April 21, 2011

MRC supports the provisions of the MAGIC Act as proposed by the Association of MN Counties.

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Jan. 12, 2011

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Jan. 26, 1998

## Health Care Financing, Access and Quality

### New Health Care Delivery Systems & Health Care Homes

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Oct. 3, 2016

## Land Use Planning and Regulation

### Buffers

MRC supports adequate funding to local drainage authorities to administer the state buffer program.

Oct. 3, 2016

### Discharge Requirements

MRC opposes overly stringent MPCA regulations on discharge requirements.

Oct. 3, 2016

### Land Use Planning and Regulation

MRC supports a balanced approach to environmental and wildlife enhancement efforts.

Jan. 9, 2004

### Land Use Planning and Regulation / Animal Agriculture County Permitting Programs

MRC recognizes production agriculture is a cornerstone of the state and rural economy and works to support programs that benefit agriculture.

Jan. 9, 2004

MRC recognizes that decisions regarding the permitting of feedlots are made by the county, and MRC supports the continuation of these permitting decisions to be made at the local level.

Jan. 26, 1998

MRC recognizes the value in maintaining natural stands of wild rice, and supports efforts to protect and enhance natural wild rice.

Oct. 10, 1997

### Public Land Management

MRC supports land use policy that promotes communication and review between agencies that grant state funding for private lands in Greater Minnesota, and the rural communities where much of those acquisitions occur. Key policy components include:

1) Preserve, Restore, and Protect: Direct a larger portion of state natural resource funds to maintenance of lands already under state administration.

A percentage of all annual natural resource land management allocations must be directed toward preservation, restoration and enhancement of lands under state management.

2) Increase annual appropriation to the Small Grants Program.

3) The state may pay no more for land acquired than the assessed market value within the area.

4) Lands purchase with state awarded grants must be held for a minimum of seven years before conveying ownership to the state.

5) Replace permanent easement with 25-year review.

6) Easements blink off if a parcel goes tax forfeit. County may sell the parcel unencumbered by easement.

7) Direct DNR to sell scattered parcels. DNR will identify scattered lands under DNR management in each county within a year after law is enacted. Counties will, within six months of the date the scattered parcels are identified, inform the DNR which parcels they wish to be sold. The DNR must offer the lands identified by the county for sale within one year of notification by the county.

8) Within two weeks of the grant application deadline, the natural resource land management agency that is administering the grant is directed to forward project applications to the counties the land in the grant is located for review and comment.

8a) Within two weeks of receiving notification of grant application, a county shall review the lands included in the application to determine how the project fits with the county comprehensive plan, or its No Net Gain policy. The county will provide results of that comparison to the commissioner in writing.

8b) Within two weeks of receiving notification of grant application, a county may

a) reply to support the grant application.

b) reply with notification it contests the grant application and stating concerns. Those concerns may include recommendations for improvements to the land before support would be granted.

\*Improvements could include fencing, weed removal etc.

c) oppose the application.

d) request a cost / benefit analysis comparing benefits of public vs. private ownership of the project area from both a regional and statewide perspective.

The cost / benefit analysis must address economic, environmental and cultural considerations in making its determinations. If requested, a cost / benefit analysis must be conducted. The cost / benefit analysis will be conducted by the agency administering the grant.

e) request findings of the cost / benefit analysis be presented at a public meeting in the county where the project is located.

9) Create State Private Land Acquisition Board. State Private Land Acquisition Board consists DNR Commissioner or representative, LSOHC member, three county commissioners, one township officer.

Amend MS97A.145 (d), (e) as follows:

(d) If the county board disapproves the acquisition, it must state valid reasons. The commissioner may not purchase or lease the land if the county board disapproves the acquisition and states its reasons within the prescribed time period. The landowner or the commissioner may appeal the disapproval to the ~~district court having jurisdiction where the land is located.~~ State Private Land Acquisition Board.

(e) The commissioner or the owner of the land may submit the proposed acquisition to the ~~(Land Exchange Board)~~ district court having jurisdiction where the land is located if: (1) the county board does not give reason for disapproval, or does not approve or disapprove the acquisition within the prescribed time period; or (2) the ~~court finds~~ commissioner or landowner believe that the disapproval is arbitrary and capricious, or that the reasons stated for disapproval are invalid.

10) If grants are awarded on a project that the county opposed and notified LSOHC within the timelines prescribed, the county may appeal to the State Private Land Acquisition Board as prescribed in 3). MS97A.145 (d) as amended.

MRC joins statewide farm and commodity organizations in opposition to permanent easements on productive ag lands and urges consideration of more flexible policies establishing reviewable easements with limited timelines. Jan. 9, 2004

MRC opposes the use of public funds for the purchase of private lands without county board approval. April 21, 2011

MRC supports a no net loss of tax base and/or acreage without approval of the local county board. Feb. 26, 1999

MRC supports efforts to recognize, quantify and alleviate degradation to public and private lands caused by beavers. Jan. 11, 2007

MRC supports increased funding to Reinvest in Minnesota. Jan. 11, 2007

When applicable, any proposed legislation impacting private land, should include a reference to Art. I, Sec. 13 of the MN Constitution pertaining to private property protections. (Sec. 13. PRIVATE PROPERTY FOR PUBLIC USE. Private property shall not be taken, destroyed or damaged for public use without just compensation therefore, first paid or secured). Jan. 26, 1998

#### Off-Highway Vehicles:

MRC supports a multiple-use strategy for public forest lands, and recognizes Off-Highway Vehicle Trails on public lands are a reasonable and desirable use for recreational, environmental and economic development purposes. Oct. 3, 2016

MRC supports the development and maintenance of environmentally sound, sustainable Off-Highway Vehicle trails on public lands in the state, and recognizes that sustainable and environmentally sound OHV trail systems provide significant economic benefits to the state, promote multiple-use of our natural resources, and reduce illegal activities. Oct. 3, 2016

MRC supports maintaining the current status for OHV's on state owned lands above Hwy. 2, and supports a dedicated system of sustainable OHV trails in the state forest system. Jan. 11, 2007

MRC opposes efforts to restrict or eliminate OHV access to public lands where access cannot be demonstrated to cause negative social or environmental impacts. Jan. 11, 2007

#### Parks and Trails

MRC supports the goals and objectives delineated in the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission Strategic Plan (2015), and the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission System Plan and Work Plan (2016), which compliment the strategic plan. Oct. 3, 2016

#### Water

MRC supports adequate funding for Aquatic Invasive Species programs for counties. Feb. 2, 2015

#### Mississippi Headwaters Board:

MRC supports sufficient funding for the Mississippi Headwaters Board. Feb. 26, 1999

#### Wetlands

MRC supports state funding through the Board of Water and Soil Resources, to local governments for wetland planning. Jan. 26, 1998

## Mandates

#### Maintenance of Effort Requirements

MRC urges Legislators to remember that many programs administered by counties – including nearly all the social services and nursing services – are mandated by the state and federal government. Jan. 15, 2003

MRC supports a full review of mandated services before any effort is made to reduce local aid to counties. The review should determine the extent to which the mandated program is dependent on the local property tax. Jan. 15, 2003

MRC believes state programs mandated for county administration should either be accompanied by adequate funding and clear direction to carry out the program, or counties should be relieved of the responsibility of carrying out the mandate.

July 8, 2009

MRC supports a full review of mandated services before any effort is made to reduce local aid to counties. The review should determine the extent to which the mandated program is dependent on the local property tax.

Jan. 15, 2003

## Public Safety, Corrections and Courts

Law Enforcement and Public Safety Collaboration / Public Safety, Correction and Courts".  
MRC supports additional funding for the BCA Buy Fund to assist counties with unforeseen costs.

Sept.22, 1999

MRC supports state bond matching funds for county jail initiatives, and supports clarification that all costs associated with the construction, operation and maintenance of county jails are outside existing levy limits.

Sept. 22, 1999

MRC supports county receipt of 3 cents on the dollar to offset additional costs of housing and processing the additional caseload of DWI offenders resulting from legislative passage of .08 as the legal blood alcohol level.

Feb. 28, 2003

MRC supports efforts to address methamphetamine production, use, and treatment through funding and county authority for:

- Treatment for methamphetamine users to include assessment, education, transitional work program, ongoing drug testing, family reunification, and after care;
- Screening for children and vulnerable adults exposed to meth;
- Child and vulnerable adult protection, including out of home placement costs;
- Cleanup of methamphetamine sites and property owner liability to include impacts to lakes and to individual sewage treatment systems; and
- Methamphetamine-related health care costs for inmates of county facilities.

March 29, 2005

MRC supports leveraging greater federal participation by assuming responsibility for decisions by courts on placement of juveniles.

Sept. 22, 1999

## Tax and Finance

### State Budget

MRC believes legislators should consider all available options to balance the state budget shortfall.

Jan. 15, 2003

MRC believes county taxpayers should not be responsible for the financial consequences of the neglected responsibilities of the State's Governor and Legislature.

July 8, 2009

### Capitol Gains

MRC supports relief on capitol gains taxes for farmers.

July 8, 2009

### County Program Aid

MRC supports legislation that would reduce County Program Aid volatility and provide increased and sustainable funding for counties to deliver tax relief for taxpayers while maintaining essential county services for constituents.

Oct. 3, 2016

MRC urges Legislators to recognize that cuts in aids to local government mean cuts to local services, or property tax increases to offset the loss of state aid.

Jan. 15, 2003

The MRC supports an increase in state-aid funding to rural counties.

Aug. 8, 1997

## Levy Limits

MRC opposes levy limits and believe levy limits are the prerogative of the county board.

April 21, 2011

MRC opposes granting SWCD's levy authority.

Feb. 28, 2003

## Liquor Tax Rebate

MRC supports the implementation of a liquor tax rebate to counties to offset the mandated costs related to alcohol treatment.

Dec. 3, 2000

## Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)

MRC supports legislation that would guarantee the state pays the property tax burden up front on purchase of land when using Outdoor Heritage or Legacy funds – thus guaranteeing local governments receive exactly what's owed in property taxes in perpetuity.

Oct. 3, 2016

MRC supports stable, equitable, and adequate funding for Payment in Lieu of Taxes.

April 19, 2010

MRC supports the use of new funds obtained through the constitutional dedication amendment to be used for preserving Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT)

Jan. 22, 2009

MRC supports fee title transfer of state-administered land in equal value to a proposed cut to that county's PILT.

April 21, 2011

## Production Taxes

MRC supports reclassification of the wind tower production tax, and any other applicable revenue generated from renewable energy sources, as a state aid for purposed of levy limit calculation.

Feb. 2, 2015

## Property Tax Reserved for Local Governments

MRC opposes initiatives by investor owned utilities that would shift personal property taxes paid on transmission and pipelines by IOU's to local governments.

Feb. 2, 2015

## Transportation

The County State Aid Highway system is the backbone of the Greater Minnesota economy and the key factor to any successful local, regional or statewide economic development plan.

Feb. 8, 2016

The MRC believes highway funding should be conducted with constitutionally dedicated funding from a statewide perspective utilizing long-term sustainable funding solutions.

Feb. 8, 2016

▪ MRC supports adequate funding for the maintenance and deployment of (state and local roads and bridges) railroads, airports and waterways as part of an integrated and efficient transportation system including adequate state funding for the Minnesota Rail Service Improvement Program (and Port Development Assistance Fund) to provide the necessary statewide access to national and international markets.

Feb. 15, 2017

▪ MRC supports increased funding for all modes of transportation to meet the documented unmet needs [at least \$2.5 billion per year for the next 20 years as identified by the Transportation Finance Advisory Committee (TFAC)] on the transportation system statewide. These increases should be comprehensive, balanced, sustainable, dedicated, and could include:

▶ Gas tax, including indexing or other inflationary increases;

- ▶ Motor vehicle registration fees;
- ▶ Motor vehicle sales tax;
- ▶ Gross receipts tax on transportation fuels.

Feb. 15, 2017

MRC supports efforts to capture revenue from all highway users, including electric vehicles.

Feb. 9, 2017

MRC supports full funding for the Board of Water and Soil administered Local Road Wetland Replacement Program.

Feb. 15, 2017

MRC supports adequate funding for the Port Development Assistance Fund	Feb. 15, 2017
MRC supports directing surplus revenues to fund highway needs.	Feb. 8, 2016
MRC supports the dedication of auto parts sales tax revenue to the HUTDF.	Oct. 3, 2016
MRC supports transferring the first \$32 million in Motor Vehicle Leased Sales Tax revenue to the HUTDF.	Feb. 8, 2016
In the event that all counties are given local option sales tax authority for highways, MRC supports distributing all non-transit revenue from the motor vehicle lease sales tax through the highway user distribution fund.	Feb. 8, 2016
MRC supports a ballot initiative to constitutionally dedicate auto part sales tax and leased vehicle sales tax to the HUTDF.	Oct. 3, 2016
MRC supports funding the Local Road Improvement Program through Capitol Investment at a level of at least \$100 million annually in non-earmarked revenues.	Feb. 8, 2016
MRC supports at least \$75 million in general obligation bonds for local bridge replacement and rehabilitation.	Feb. 8, 2016
MRC supports the creation of a large bridge projects fund for bridge projects above \$5 million.	Feb. 8, 2016
MRC wants decision makers to know that local initiatives like the Wheelage Tax and Sales Tax initiatives are not options that offer relief to border counties or counties with low population and little retail sales base.	Feb. 8, 2016
The MRC supports sufficient and immediate funding to counties for turn back accounts.	Feb. 26, 1999
<b>MVST</b>	
MRC supports the continued distribution of 60% of MVST funds through the HUTDF.	Oct. 3, 2016
<b>Transit</b>	
MRC supports adequate funding for rural transit systems.	April 21, 2011

## Tribal Affairs

MRC supports no loss of revenue or tax base to the county, or the use of state revenue for the purchase of private land to be converted to trust land.	Oct 3, 2016
MRC supports tribal and federal state responsibility for out of home placement costs as they pertain to counties Native American Children	Oct 3, 2016
MRC supports state remuneration to counties for required county services resulting from casino activities.	Feb. 26, 1998
MRC opposes the use of county property tax revenues for tribal court placement costs.	May 22, 2008
MRC supports tribal and state funding for all children placed through tribal courts.	Oct 3, 2016
MRC supports the continuation of mandatory law enforcement agreements between tribal governments and local law enforcement.	Oct. 3, 2016

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