

From: [Bill Becker](#)
Subject: FW: MN COLA feedback
Date: Wednesday, November 13, 2013 2:59:04 PM

As requested by Joe Shneider.

From: Joseph N.Shneider [mailto:jshneider@visi.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 13, 2013 2:34 PM
To: David Hartwell; Bill Becker
Cc: Heather Koop; Joe Shneider (external)
Subject: MN COLA feedback

(Bill, please distribute this email to the full LSOHC prior the meeting and let me know if you would like me to bring copies to the meeting.)

Dear Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Members,

September, October and November have been very interesting for MN COLA as we have watched the actions of the Council and your staff.

We feel compelled to set the record straight as to our collective actions and want to communicate our position on the new HAIS-4 proposal.

Starting on a positive note, we are very pleased that the LSOHC has decided to take steps to help combat the spread of AIS in Minnesota. The science is clear, AIS clearly disrupts the habitat for fish. Your action is important and a good step, and is consistent with your charter from the voters and the legislature to ". . . restore, protect, and enhance Minnesota's wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and wildlife. . ." The \$3.65 million recommended on September 20, 2013 is the first significant money flowing to AIS efforts from the Outdoor Heritage Fund. So we thank you for taking leadership on this critical and urgent issue facing our public waters!

However, we are disturbed by the characterization in Bill Becker's Agenda Item Memo to the LSOHC dated November 14, 2013, in which he outlines that MN COLA is working cooperatively with the Initiative Foundation on this new proposal. Despite assurances from David Hartwell and Bill Becker, we were not included at the table as this new proposal's achievement plan was being developed. In fact, as mentioned in the first call with Don Hickman, the Initiative Foundation was not even informed that they should be working with us. Our participation to date consisted of two phone calls "tweaking" the document after the Initiative Foundation submitted the first draft. Clearly we have different perspectives on "cooperation."

We are extremely disturbed by the general lack of urgency in the new AIS proposal. The LSOHC terms for proposals specify a 3-year availability of funds, and yet you are overtly making an exception to extend the length of time for spending on this proposal to 5 years. Using pilot projects to determine what works simply doesn't have to take that long when there are effective solutions working in other parts of the country. Clearly we have different perspectives on "urgency."

Lastly, we were disturbed to hear from Don Hickman that the LSOHC staff and the MN DNR suggested that very limited number lakes should be addressed by these funds. In our first conversation, the number of lakes targeted by the \$3.65 million was “2 or 3.” Spending this kind of money for 2 or 3 lakes over 5 years is unconscionable, and especially so when the risk of AIS to all of the state’s public waters is so high. Even after being challenged, the Initiative Foundation is still imagining the number of lakes would be limited to “perhaps 6”, although close groupings of lakes might increase that number somewhat. Clearly we have different perspectives on the reach of the AIS problem and how public money should be spent.

MN COLA will continue to offer our input to this new proposal, if allowed. We believe much more effective use of the Outdoor Heritage Fund’s \$3.65 million is possible. A fast-path approach must be found to get the citizen’s sales tax revenues working on effective solutions to the problem, addressing far more public waters, much sooner than currently envisioned.

Sincerely,

Joe Shneider
Vice-President, MN COLA