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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

February 4, 2014

The errors and substantive omissions within “*MN’s Legacy Amendment: Whose Legacy Is It?*” and the companion editorial “*Foxes in Henhouses*” paint a misleading picture of the Legacy Amendment’s impact and Pheasants Forever’s role. We expected and deserve better from a publication that prides itself in fair and balanced reporting.

The flaws within both articles are too numerous to articulate in the short space allowed so we have provided them to the editor-in-chief separately. However, there is room to detail a few examples here.

The cover image, backhanded reference to “pheasantgate,” and the “foxes in henhouses” headline suggest scandal and impropriety, yet exhaustive research and dozens of interviews unearthed nothing of the sort. Pheasants Forever has performed its work with guidance from state agencies, followed the letter of the law, operated with transparency, and been audited through this entire process. We are proud of the track record our organization has achieved in the non-profit community, and the magazine unnecessarily questioned that in the interests of adding drama to a flawed story premise.

Multiple references to Legacy grants being used for “pheasants” also is a substantial misrepresentation. The land acquired through Legacy grants facilitated by Pheasants Forever has been for the purpose of protecting or *restoring prairies and/or wetlands*. If reporters had visited one of these projects, they would have seen the rabbits, deer, and pheasants mentioned in the editorial, as well as waterfowl, butterflies, pollinators, turkeys, endangered species, as well as cleaner water, reduced flooding and soil erosion. All of this land is turned over to either the state or federal U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – not “private interests” as stated several times in the article and editorial. Contrary to the editorial’s incredibly offensive reference to “white man’s sports,” these lands belong to and are available for use by all Minnesotans regardless of race, gender or economic status.

Lastly, the articles, in their criticism of the \$40+ million in grants facilitated by Pheasants Forever, failed to state that one of the main reasons we were chosen for these grants was our ability to provide an additional \$11 million in matching funds through member and sponsor donations. This point was made several times to the reporters but ignored because it didn’t fit their story’s premise. We’d be eager to hear of the “already existing, accountable resources” mentioned in the editorial that have demonstrated the ability to add 25 percent to the public’s investment.

I'm very passionate about the positive benefits the Legacy Amendment funds are providing all Minnesotans, and I believe spending state money on clean water, the environment and natural resources is a wise long-term investment. It's clear that the authors don't hold those values as dear and I respect that. When they pose the question, "whose legacy is it?" the answer is future generations of Minnesotans who will be able to enjoy sky blue waters, prairies, wetlands and forests as a result of the Legacy Amendment funds.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Vincent', written in a cursive style.

Howard K. Vincent
President & Chief Executive Officer