

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

WITH HOPE FOR OUR COLLECTIVE FUTURE

During the last week of summer, my neighborhood was rocked by the tragic mass shooting at Annunciation Catholic School & Church. Just two years ago, my daughter was a student there. Now, friends, neighbors, and an entire community are forever changed by a senseless act of violence.



Paul Austin
Executive Director

In the aftermath of this tragedy, I have been struck by the powerful role that hope, and the biblical quote that is the motto for this school year, has played in helping people, both individually and together, to find paths toward healing and supporting each other. That quote from the book of Jeremiah: “A future filled with hope.”


Now as I drive past Annunciation on my way to work each day, I see the illuminated words “a future filled with hope,” and I am reminded why I started working at Conservation Minnesota over 20 years ago. It was with the hope of building a future where my own children could have clean water to drink, clean air to breathe, and the opportunity to live the peace and joy that Minnesota’s amazing outdoors can provide.

The words remind me of how far we have come and what is possible when we work together. We have done big things and together we can do more. They make me grateful that you are a partner in building our better future together. And they ask me what I will do today to turn that hope into reality.

So, let’s take this moment to celebrate how far we have come and envision where we are headed. I am excited to see what is possible as we build “a future filled with hope” together.

The work of Conservation Minnesota is guided by your values and priorities. We listen to Minnesotans and focus on solving the conservation problems that matter most to you.

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CONSERVATION MINNESOTA



WINTER 2025–26 NEWSLETTER

A proven record of progress



When progress feels slow, it helps to see how far we’ve come—together. Each milestone represents real change, achieved through the passion and partnership of Minnesotans like you. These are the **game changers** that are shaping a more hopeful future for all Minnesotans.



Legacy Amendment & Lottery Renewal

In 2008, Minnesotans passed the Clean Water, Land, & Legacy Amendment—the **largest state conservation funding package in US history**, providing billions for water, habitat, parks, and the arts.

In 2024, Minnesotans renewed the Lottery Amendment, securing **25 more years of critical conservation funding** to protect our Great Outdoors.

These funds are cornerstones of the legacy we’re building together—to protect the wild places, clean waters, and beloved species that define our state.



Amara’s Law & banning toxic chemicals

Minnesota has **led the nation in banning harmful chemicals** that endanger our families, firefighters, and natural resources:

- Banned BPA in baby bottles (2009)
- Ended toxic flame retardants (2015, 2019)
- Achieved the first state ban on TCE (2019)
- Led the nation with PFAS bans in food packaging (2021) and consumer products—Amara’s Law (2023)



100% Clean Energy Standard

In 2023, Minnesotans helped secure the 100% Clean Energy Standard—requiring all utilities to produce **carbon-free electricity by 2040**. This landmark law makes clean, affordable energy the standard for everyone.



The Packaging Act

In 2024, we passed the Packaging Waste & Cost Reduction Act, making Minnesota the fifth state to hold manufacturers accountable for packaging waste. By 2032, **all packaging must be reusable, recyclable, or compostable**.



The next chapter

These victories remind us what’s possible when Minnesotans come together. Now, it’s time to build on that momentum and write the next chapter of our shared story.

Imagine your favorite place in Minnesota. Now imagine it’s protected for your grandchildren’s children. Imagine a future where you can fill your glass directly from the tap and

drink with confidence. Where you can swim and fish at your favorite lake without worry. Where energy comes from the unending sun and the limitless wind, landfills are hardly necessary, and composting and recycling is effortless. **We can build this together.**



Together, we can create the Minnesota we all deserve

The first step to making progress is **imagining** a better future. Then we bolster our visions with hope. And we back up that hope with the actions it takes to finish the job. In the coming year we’ll be working toward:



Tap water you can trust

We will advocate for the funds needed to remove Minnesota’s remaining lead pipes, tackle PFAS contamination, and create policies to safeguard our groundwater.




Air that’s safe to breathe

We will advance strong, community-focused air quality protections and uphold our clean energy commitments to ensure affordable energy for everyone.



Smarter waste & recycling

We will hold manufacturers accountable for what they produce, the impact it leaves behind, and the energy it consumes. 



SUPPORT OUR VISION

As a member-supported nonprofit, we rely on your gifts to help as we plan for what’s next. conservationminnesota.org/donate

