

LEGISLATIVE-CITIZEN COMMISSION ON MINNESOTA RESOURCES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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\$26.1 million recommended to benefit environment, energy, and economy in Minnesota

(St. Paul, MN, December 12, 2008) – On December 10, 2008 the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR) completed its annual process for making funding recommendations to the Minnesota Legislature. The LCCMR is recommending the 2009 Legislature fund a total of \$26.1 million, primarily from the state's Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, to 33 projects around the state that will benefit Minnesota's environment, promote energy conservation, and provide jobs in natural resource protection and enhancement.

The 33 projects being recommended address the full range of priorities specified in the LCCMR's 2009 Request for Proposals (RFP). Those priorities were focused on acquiring natural resource data and information; protecting and enhancing land, habitat, and water resources; providing outdoor recreational opportunities; addressing threats of invasive species; and solving energy issues. Examples of recommended projects include:

- Programs to assist Minnesota communities in implementing cost-saving and carbon-reducing energy efficiency strategies
- Research to assist with greenhouse gas emissions reductions and alternative energy planning in Minnesota.
- Accelerating production of Minnesota's County Geological Atlases, which provide essential information for sustainable use and protection of groundwater resources throughout the state.
- Further development of promising techniques for preventing and controlling the movement of carp species and the detrimental impacts they have on water bodies throughout Minnesota.
- Efforts to protect Minnesota's waters from endocrine disrupting contaminants that can be detrimental to both aquatic and human health.
- Development of effective options for protecting Lake Superior from invasive species threats through safe treatment of ship ballast water discharges.
- Expansion and enhancement of parks, trails, and habitat corridors statewide.

"Given present circumstances with the economy and the state budget, the Commission made a concerted effort this year to stretch the dollars available from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to maximize cross-benefits for the state," said LCCMR Director Susan Thornton. "The suite of projects being recommended were chosen for their ability to simultaneously benefit the state's environment and natural resources, provide economic stimulus, and help transition the state to more sustainable energy practices."

The LCCMR's recommendations will now go before the 2009 Legislature for consideration and approval during the legislative session beginning January 6. If approved, recommended projects could begin work on July 1, 2009, when the funds become available.

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A total of \$26.1 million is available for recommendation by the LCCMR in 2009: \$25.6 million from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, \$66,000 from the Great Lakes Protection Account, and \$400,000 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

In response to the LCCMR's 2009 proposal process, proposals requesting a total of approximately \$105.3 million were received. Combined requests amounted to more than \$4 requested for every \$1 available, making for a very competitive process. Of the original 111 proposals received, 55 were requested to give presentations and answer questions before the LCCMR. From this reduced pool, 33 projects received a recommendation for some portion of the \$26.1 million available.

The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund was created in 1988. Forty percent of the net proceeds, or approximately seven cents of every dollar spent on playing the lottery, goes into the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, which is then managed and invested for continued growth by the State Board of Investment. The LCCMR can make recommendations on an annual cycle for up to 5.5% of the existing market value of the Trust Fund. Expenditures from the Trust Fund must be used for the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources

Additional information on the LCCMR's 2009 proposal recommendations and the 2009 proposal process can be found online at: www.lccmr.leg.mn.

Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR)

The LCCMR is made up of 17 members (5 Senators, 5 Representatives, 5 citizens appointed by the governor, and one citizen appointed by each the Senate and the House). The function of the LCCMR (formerly LCMR) is to make funding recommendations to the Minnesota State Legislature for special environment and natural resource projects, primarily from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. These projects help maintain and enhance Minnesota's environment and natural resources. The LCCMR developed from a program initiated in 1963. Since 1963, over \$600 million has been appropriated to more than 1,250 projects recommended by the Commission to protect and enhance Minnesota's environment and natural resources.

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