



## Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

### MEMO

To: BCWMC Board of Commissioners  
From: Administrator Jester  
Date: December 16, 2025

#### **RE: Engaging with Hennepin County on Request for Change to MN Statute 383B.79**

At the meeting in May 2025, the Commission approved submitting a resolution to Minnesota Watersheds for their 2026 legislative platform seeking to revise MN Statute 383B.79 to include watershed management organizations (resolution attached). At their meeting in August, MN Watersheds approved the resolution. As such, it is now part of their legislative platform, although not a high priority.

In speaking with the lobbyist for MN Watersheds, he indicated that it might be advantageous to have Hennepin County lobby for the change to the statute because it impacts only Hennepin County and is being requested specifically to enable BCWMC to officially partner with the county and others on multi-jurisdictional partnerships.

In speaking with Hennepin County staff, they recommend that the Commission send an official letter to the county's inter-governmental relations group (IRG) requesting a meeting to discuss the proposed statute revision and options for advancing the revision at the legislature.

**At Thursday's meeting, I am seeking approval to craft and send such a letter (with Chair Cesnik's signature) and to engage with Hennepin County's IRG group on this matter.**

# Background Information

## 2025 Minnesota Watersheds Resolution

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Proposing Watershed: Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission

Contact Name: Laura Jester, Administrator  
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Resolution Title: Seeking Revision to MN Statute 383B.79 to Include Watershed Management Organizations

**Background that led to the submission of this resolution:**

*Describe the problem you wish to solve, provide background information to understand the factors that led to the issue, and explain why the issue is important now. If relevant, attach statutory or regulatory documents.*

[MN Statute 383B.79 Multijurisdictional Program](#) gives Hennepin County the ability to create multijurisdictional reinvestment programs in partnership with certain jurisdictions in the county including watershed districts that are wholly or partially in the county. The statute does not include watershed management organizations in the list of jurisdictions allowed to officially participate in these programs.

The Bassett Creek Valley lies in the lower end of the watershed in the city of Minneapolis and receives stormwater runoff from over 20,000 acres of upstream and surrounding drainage areas. It lies within a natural low area that is plagued by historic contamination, poor soils, and high groundwater. In addition, the 100-year floodplain within the Bassett Creek Valley extends up and beyond the creek's channel and into surrounding neighborhood and commercial areas, negatively impacting existing properties and hindering redevelopment opportunities.

Improved conditions in the Bassett Creek Valley are a high priority for the BCWMC. Since 2019, the BCWMC has been working with the City of Minneapolis, Minneapolis Park and Rec Board, Hennepin County, and other partners to study the valley and develop plans for regional stormwater and floodplain management, ecological improvements, and community access to the creek. The County has expressed interest in convening a multijurisdictional partnership to implement a Community Works Project that would bring together science, partners, community planning, and funding to realize vast improvements in the Bassett Creek Valley. The BCWMC seeks to be an official partner in this endeavor. However, the statute is unclear on whether this is possible.

**Efforts to solve the problem:**

*Document the efforts you have taken to try to solve the issue. For example: have you spoken to state agency staff, legislators, county commissioners, etc.? If so, what was their response?*

No actions have been taken on this issue to date.

**Is legislative action the best means of addressing the matter? If yes, what is the purpose or intent of your proposal? If not, what advocacy steps could be taken with state or local government officials?**

*Describe potential solutions for the problem. Provide references to statutes or rules if applicable.*

A change to the statute would require legislative action. BCWMC advocates for a change to the statute language to include “watershed management organizations” in Subdivision 1.

**Anticipated support or opposition:**

*Who would be willing to partner with your watershed or Minnesota Watersheds on the issue? Who may be opposed to our efforts? (Ex. other local units of government, special interest groups, political parties, etc.)?*

Hennepin County is likely to support this resolution. No known opposition.

**This issue: (check all that apply)**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Applies only to our district   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Requires legislative action  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Applies only to 1 or 2 regions | <input type="checkbox"/> Requires state agency advocacy  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Applies to the entire state    | <input type="checkbox"/> Impacts Minnesota Watersheds bylaws or MOPP<br>(MOPP = Manual of Policies and Procedures) |

X This would apply to any watershed management organization wholly or partially in Hennepin County.

**MINNESOTA WATERSHEDS RESOLUTION XX  
Resolution Seeking Revision to MN Statute 383B.79 to Include Watershed  
Management Organizations**

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota Statute 383B.79 Multijurisdictional Program gives Hennepin County the ability to create multijurisdictional reinvestment programs in partnership with certain jurisdictions in the county including watershed districts that are wholly or partially in the county; and

**WHEREAS**, a high priority goal of the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission (a WMO) is to collaborate on evaluation, sequencing, and implementation of multi-beneficial projects within the Bassett Creek Valley to create regional flood storage, reduce floodplain by at least 8 acres, improve regional stormwater management and improve creek access; and

**WHEREAS**, Hennepin County has expressed interest in utilizing the multijurisdictional program to implement a Community Works Project that would bring together partners, science, community planning, and funding to realize vast improvements in the Bassett Creek Valley; and

**WHEREAS**, the Bassett Creek Watershed Management Commission wishes to participate as an official jurisdiction on the Community Works Project; and

**WHEREAS**, Minnesota Statute 383B.79 does not include watershed management organizations (WMOs) in the list of jurisdictions allowed to officially participate in these programs.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that Minnesota Watersheds seeks a revision to Minnesota Statute 383B.79 Subd 1 to explicitly include watershed management organizations in the list of jurisdictions that can be involved with multijurisdictional reinvestment programs.