

# 2018 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



## CULVERT REPLACEMENTS

## SUPPORT HF 717 & SF 643

- Hold towns harmless from culvert replacement costs imposed upon them for environmental or water-quality improvement purposes, and not for road purposes.
- Currently, towns may be assessed costs to replace culverts under town roads when a drainage authority pursues an environmental or water-quality improvement project. Minn. Stat. § 103E.315.
- The existing culverts may be in good condition, but be deemed insufficient for the drainage authority's project.
- Towns would continue to pay the costs of culvert replacements related to their road maintenance projects.
- HF 717 & SF 643 appropriate money from the Clean Water Fund to pay the costs of culvert replacements required for drainage projects.



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# 2018 Legislative Priorities

**Transportation: At a cost of over \$170 million per year, townships maintain over 55,000 miles of roads & approximately 6,000 bridges, of which over 400 are on the deficiency list.**

- Seek immediate and long term increased comprehensive funding that is sufficient, predictable, sustainable, constitutionally dedicated, and equitable for townships.
- Current spending is insufficient to meet and maintain the increasing demand placed on township infrastructure. Most recent study available says townships need at least an additional \$15 million per year above current expenditures to meet the demand.
- Provide funding to replace culverts when needed for environmental reasons, not road purposes.
- Require a written agreement with the township before a county can revert jurisdiction of a road to a township, which increase the township's responsibilities, liabilities, and costs.
- Restore 30 MPH speed limit option for Rural Residential Districts.
- Require funding adequate to build roads to a minimum 10-ton standard before approving any increase in truck weight limits or sizes.
- Restore right of way management powers related to flexible force mains used to transport animal waste.
- Seeks input in the permitting process for vehicles exceeding size and weight standard.

**Broadband: Robust broadband is essential to the vitality of rural communities.**

- Fund to equitable and affordable access to broadband services for all residents, at speeds not less than the State's goals for 2026. Unserved areas must remain the top priority.

**Annexation: Township should be on equal ground with a city when faced with a proposed annexation.**

- Protect orderly annexation agreements from interference by cities not a party to the agreement by limiting annexation of land subject to an orderly annexation agreement to only the parties of the agreement.
- Establish a detachment process to allow owners of qualified properties to revert to an abutting township in a manner like the annexation-by-ordinance process cities use to annex township land.

**Taxes and Aids: Townships are efficient but 75% dependent on property taxes, which is not equitable or sustainable.**

- Increase funding for Town Aid program to ensure full funding of the Town Aid formula.
- Hold townships harmless, dollar-for-dollar, from lost tax revenues by seeking increased, sustainable, and dedicated funding for the Payment-in-lieu-of-Taxes (PILT) program.
- Develop an alternative or supplemental tax reimbursement process based on a pay-as-you-buy approach for all future State acquisition of land resulting in lost or reduced tax revenues to the township.

**Environment: Protecting our resources; providing healthy communities**

**Noxious Weed Control: Noxious weeds are a threat to the environment, destroying natural habitat.**

- Allow townships to hold State and Counties responsible for weeds in their rights-of-way.

**Government Operations: Grassroots governance at work.**

**Elections: Townships serve as local election officials and protect the integrity of elections.**

- Allow townships to determine which four hours they will have an authorized person available to accept filings on the last day to file for office.

**Mandate Relief & Cost Reductions**

- Reduce costs of townships obtaining easements across state land, especially for roads sited on school trust land.
- Seek flexibility on MS4 permits so apply only to urbanized portions of a township.
- Implement 90-day notice periods for State agency hearings, actions, or comment periods.

**Miscellaneous**

- Enhance public notice and role of township in process used by State and counties before use of publicly owned land is changed or modified.
- Hold utilities responsible for damages they cause in or to road rights-of-way and related infrastructure including culverts, and hold road authorities immune for damage to utilities whose infrastructure is improperly placed or marked.