

## **Izaak Walton League - Minnesota Division**

Re: HF 1489/SF 1515 Wetland Conservation Act Modifications

***\* The Minnesota Division of the Izaak Walton League of America can support this legislation only if three measures that were thoroughly discussed in stakeholder meetings over the past two years are included:***

***1) Amend the statute to make DNR Lands and Mineral Division a Local Governmental Unit (LGU) for purposes of the Act - so that wetland rules and regulations apply to all industries and individuals in Minnesota, equally.*** Lax DNR regulation of the mining industry's wetland impacts and subsequent mitigation are the source of most of the current wetland regulatory controversy. Assuring that DNR Lands and Minerals applies the same rules and regulations as all other units of government in Minnesota will address this problem directly.

***2) Eliminate the "special for mining only" regulatory merger of two distinct watersheds in northeastern Minnesota. (Delete language on lines 4.12-4.15.)*** This provision is a major reason that mining mitigation is taking place far from the impacted watersheds - in Aitkin and Lake of the Woods Counties.

***3) Require that all wetland mitigation that is authorized to take place outside of an impacted watershed be accomplished within designated high priority areas for wetland replacement.*** There is little value in declaring areas as high priority for wetland restoration, without requiring their use. If wetland restorations can continue to occur throughout the state, even in non-priority areas, low public value mitigation will continue.

***\* The Izaak Walton League of America - Minnesota Division believes these changes are necessary to align the proposed legislation with Governor Dayton's 2012 Executive Order 12-04, which sets out as goals, "...to maintain No Net Loss of Wetland as a State goal under the Wetland Conservation Act and to further advance the long-term protection and enhancement of Minnesota's wetland resources."***