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Dear Board Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District, ahead of the January 8<sup>th</sup> listening session. My name is Jenna Olson, and I serve as the Water Resources Manager for the City of Eagan. I am writing on behalf of the City, following our recent annual check-in with staff from the Watershed District.

During our annual check-in, staff requested feedback on ways the District could provide more effective support to Eagan. While we have no concerns about the support we currently receive, one opportunity did come up related to coordination with the railroad. As you are aware, Eagan and several other communities within the District are bordered to the west by rail lines owned and operated by Union Pacific. Beyond these rail lines is DNR property, and ultimately the Minnesota River. The State-owned property includes several sensitive natural resource areas, including multiple fens.

The City is responsible for several culverts along the rail corridor. Maintaining these structures is critical, as they provide hydrologic connectivity between water resources in the City, and the floodplain / wetland areas along the river. Unfortunately, the railroad is notoriously difficult to coordinate with – which makes conducting even simple maintenance activities nearly impossible.

Our request is for the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District to help facilitate a better working relationship between the railroad and the communities that border it within the District. As a major landowner within a critical resource area, it is in everyone's best interest to bring Union Pacific to the table as a collaborator. Further, the infrastructure at issue is vital to the integrity of the rail lines themselves – lines that are at times supporting rail cars carrying materials that could pose a risk to the environment if released.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments to the District, and look forward to continuing our shared commitment toward environmental protection in the future.

Sincerely,

Jenna Olson

Water Resources Manager

City of Eagan – Department of Public Works