



SCOTT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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BARB WECKMAN BREKKE, DISTRICT 1
TOM WOLF, DISTRICT 2
JODY BRENNAN, DISTRICT 3
DAVE BEER, DISTRICT 4
JON ULRICH, DISTRICT 5

July 1, 2025

Joseph Barisonzi
President, Board of Managers
Lower Minnesota River Watershed District
112 E 5th Street #102
Chaska, MN 55318

Subject: Request for Support in Redistributing Representation on the Board of Managers

Dear Chair Barisonzi and Managers,

On behalf of the Scott County Board of Commissioners, I am writing to thank the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD) Board of Managers for initiating an important discussion on potential changes to the overall representation on the district's governance board. Currently, the LMRWD Board is represented by one (1) member from Carver, Scott and Dakota Counties, and two (2) members from Hennepin County.

The County received your letter dated May 8, 2025, requesting County Board support in expanding the LMRWD Board from five (5) to six (6) members, with the additional seat designated for Scott County.

On June 2, 2025, the County Board held a workshop to discuss your letter with Scott County-appointed Board Manager Janet Williams, District Administrator Will Lytle and county staff in attendance. As noted in your letter, one point of discussion was that Scott County represents the largest portion of the LMRWD by both land area and population and - beginning with taxes payable in 2025 – has the highest net tax capacity among all counties within the district. We also discussed the County's previous position on this topic. In 2010, the County Board petitioned the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) for the redistribution of the 5-member LMRWD Board, whereby Scott County would add one position and Hennepin County would drop one position. While the 2010 petition was eventually withdrawn, the reasons for a redistribution request remain even more worthy of consideration now:

- The LMRWD has been in existence for 65 years with Hennepin County having two managers over most, if not all, of this time.
- Scott County now represents the largest portion of the LMRWD in terms of land area, population and net tax capacity. Redistribution, rather than addition, would better align with the guidance for the distribution of managers under the current Minn. Stat. § 103D.301.
- Most of the businesses benefitting from maintenance of the 9-foot shipping channel are in Scott County.

- The County Board is not interested in growing the district's governance board, which tends to increase the administrative costs and functions of an agency, rather than keeping the focus on the primary water resource: the Minnesota River. This Board contends that a 5-member board is adequate to govern this agency.

For these reasons, the County Board believes it is time for Scott County residents to receive greater representation on the 5-member board. We respectfully ask that the LMRWD withdraw its proposed petition to BWSR and instead support Scott County petitioning for a redistribution of manager positions as allowed under Minnesota Statutes § 103D.301, whereby Carver, Hennepin and Dakota Counties would have one (1) member, and Scott County would have two (2) members.

In closing, the County Board again thanks the LMRWD Board for initiating this important discussion and working together to strengthen our partnership.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'DB' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Dave Beer, Chair
Scott County Board of Commissioners

Cc: Janet Williams

Response to Request for Redistribution of LMRWD Board

To: Dave Beer, Chair

Scott County Board of Commissioners

From: Joseph Barisonzi, President

Board of Managers, Lower Minnesota River Watershed District

Date: [Today's Date]

Subject: Response to Request for Redistribution of LMRWD Board Representation

Chair Beer and Commissioners,

Thank you for your thoughtful letter dated July 1, 2025, and for engaging seriously with the question of Board representation on the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD).

As you know, the Board previously deliberated and voted—by a margin of 4–1—against the redistribution of existing Board seats. That vote came in response to a motion by the Scott County representative, Apollo Lamers, and reflected the Board's consensus that while the desire to increase Scott County representation is valid, redistributing current seats would only replicate existing inequities by reducing representation for other counties without correcting the underlying imbalance.

Instead, the Board proposed a solution that adheres to Minnesota Statute § 103D.301 and better reflects the current distribution of property, population, and tax capacity across the district: the addition of a sixth seat designated for Scott County. This option carries a negligible fiscal impact—approximately \$5,000 annually—and achieves a more equitable balance of representation while maintaining our commitment to effective governance and shared responsibility among the counties.

The Board stands by this position and respectfully reaffirms its vote. We continue to believe that a petition to expand the Board is both a reasonable and responsible step forward, and we would welcome Scott County's support in submitting such a petition to BWSR. Should Scott County choose to initiate such a petition, the Board would consider it favorably.

While your letter raises additional concerns, we do not believe this is the appropriate forum or moment to address those points. We remain committed to working collaboratively to advance our shared interests in protecting and managing the vital resources of the Lower Minnesota River watershed.

Thank you again for your partnership.

Respectfully,

Joseph Barisonzi

President, Board of Managers

Lower Minnesota River Watershed District