

Per- & Poly-fluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

PFAS are a class of pervasive chemicals that have been linked to various health concerns and have been found in waterbodies across the state. PFAS can be removed from drinking water through an expensive treatment process, but there is no technologically feasible method for removing them from wastewater.

CGMC's Role: We are participating in the municipal source reduction strategy task force, which was created and funded last year based on legislation we introduced. We actively engaged with the MPCA and their PFAS monitoring stakeholder group, resulting in favorable changes to the monitoring proposal. We will continue to defend against proposals that impose unreasonable demands against municipalities and seek ways to reduce sources of PFAS.

Chloride

According to an MPCA report, more than 100 cities could face chloride limits in their wastewater permits, but there is no feasible method to remove chloride at a wastewater facility. Most cities will need a variance from these permit requirements, which will still require action by the city to reduce sources of chloride. Some cities may be required to install a central water softening system, but others may be able to address the issue by working with citizens to remove and/or upgrade home water softening equipment.

CGMC's Role: We supported "safe salting" legislation that would help minimize salt application to landscapes. We will continue to pursue state funding for grants to assist cities with the removal or upgrade of home water softeners and to support cities on this issue.



Funding for Extreme Weather Events & Resiliency

As the state continues to face extreme weather events, cities are looking to alternative approaches to address resiliency and related water quality issues. Many cities need assistance in developing resiliency plans. Moreover, current state funding may not always support innovative projects, including stormwater mitigation, because they do not fit into traditional program definitions.

CGMC's Role: We continue to support state funding for resiliency planning. We also support bonding funds for a new program aimed at addressing stormwater mitigation.

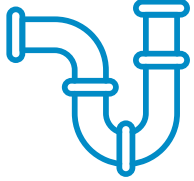
Technical Assistance for Our Communities

Our cities are facing an array of problems due to aging infrastructure, nutrient pollution, emerging chemicals, ineffective weather resiliency, and other challenges. Some are at risk of falling behind in development because they lack the technical expertise to formulate long-term plans, create innovative solutions, or access funding.

CGMC's Role: We advocated for a grant program to help cities develop long-term plans for their wastewater facilities and related sewer systems that will allow them to address current needs and future challenges, think creatively about cost-effective solutions, and access funds needed to implement those plans. With the collapse of budget negotiations, this proposal did not advance, but we will continue to advocate for this assistance.



Lead Pipe Inventory & Replacement



The EPA requires all cities to inventory the lead pipes within their water systems by October 2024 and develop plans for mitigating and removing lead pipes. These processes will be challenging and expensive for many cities with older infrastructure.

CGMG's Role: In 2022, the CGMC advocated for both inventory and replacement funding, which were included in the House Omnibus Health bill but did not advance when negotiations at the Capitol fell apart. The CGMC will continue to advocate for both.

Water Infrastructure Funding

As facilities age and regulatory burdens increase, cities face increasing water infrastructure costs. Ensuring that cities receive help from the state in the form of Public Facilities Authority (PFA) grants and loans is vital.

CGMC's Role: We continue to advocate for PFA funding from bonding and the Clean Water Fund. In 2022, we pushed for a large bonding bill that included substantial PFA funding and ongoing Point Source Implementation Grant (PSIG) funding. We also pushed back on proposed changes to the PFA's programs that would have restricted the ability of our cities to receive funds. With no bonding bill introduced or passed during the 2022 session, we will continue to advocate for these goals either in a special session or in January.



Wild Rice Sulfate Rule



Minnesota's standard for sulfate in wild rice waters is outdated and may result in permit limits that require expensive facility upgrades that would not certifiably improve water quality. At the insistence of the EPA, the MPCA added 35 waterbodies to the Impaired Waters List for exceeding the sulfate standard and has begun to include sulfate effluent limits in draft permits for some cities.

CGMC's Role: Working with a variety of stakeholders, we advocated for funding to update the standard to ensure any permit limit is grounded in sound science. Moving forward, we will continue to monitor this issue and seek opportunities to mitigate the impact of this regulation on municipal wastewater facilities.

Supporting Precedent-Setting Litigation

Through the Environmental Action Fund (EAF), the CGMC provides support in precedent-setting litigation and regulatory matters that may impact the interests of many members.

CGMC's Role: Currently, the CGMC is providing support to the City of Osakis as it challenges its wastewater permit. The Minnesota Court of Appeals ruled that the MPCA made legal errors and lacked substantial evidence to enforce a permit limit on the city's wastewater facility. The CGMC has weighed in on multiple variance requests and other permit matters, impaired water listings, and rulemaking proceedings that could have significant impacts on our members.



Proposed Permit Fee Increase



MPCA has signaled its intent to impose a fee increase on water quality-related permits to generate more funding for its water quality operations in 2023. A significant portion of this increase could fall on municipalities.

CGMC's Role: We will continue to push for increased state general fund spending for water quality operations rather than requiring local municipalities to pay for these increases. We will monitor and advocate as the proposed fee increases move forward.