

# DFL Environmental Caucus 2024 Resolutions

January 28, 2024 DFLEC Caucus Meeting



# Our Process

Our Platform and Resolutions Committee Chair asked the general membership of the DFL Environmental Caucus to submit issues they wanted resolutions on. He then formed a committee who took these proposed issues, worked with trusted partners, such as Friends of the Boundary Waters and the Land Stewardship Project, on the language, which resulted in the 20 resolutions you will be learning about today.

Soon, you can download pre-filled out Resolutions Forms on our website [dflenvironment.org](http://dflenvironment.org) to take with you to precinct caucuses on February 27.



# THANK YOU!

To our members who submitted Resolutions and Resolutions ideas!

Our Resolutions Committee:

Matt Doll, Committee Chair

Veda Kanitz

Lorraine Rovig

Janelle Kuznia

Phil Adam

Greg Laden

Verlynn Schmalle

Larry Baker

Libby Bent

Anne Morse

Catherine Zimmer

Wesley Sisson

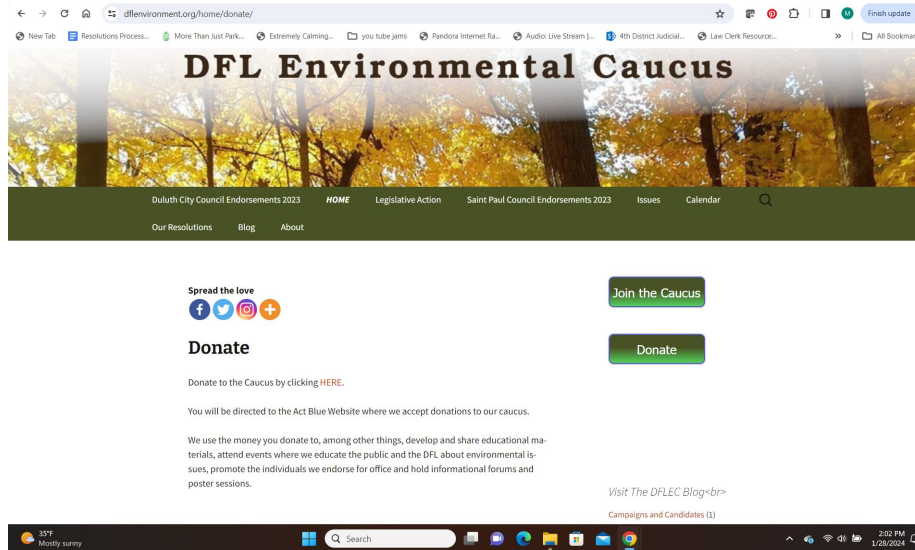
# What Can You Do?

Print up our resolutions from our website and take them to your precinct caucus. We will have downloadable, pre-filled forms soon!

**RUN FOR DELEGATE** at your precinct caucus so you will have the opportunity to get them passed in your OU or SD convention, where you can run for delegate for your CD and the State conventions, and then again at the State Convention.

# How Can I Help?

**DONATE** to the Environmental Caucus! We are aiming to help our endorsed candidates that are Environmental Challengers in key districts both with volunteer power and monetary donations! We need you to help us elect environmentally-minded legislators and Congresspeople.



The screenshot shows the homepage of the DFL Environmental Caucus website. The browser address bar displays [dflenvironmental.org/home/donate/](https://dflenvironmental.org/home/donate/). The main header features the title "DFL Environmental Caucus" over a background image of trees with yellow autumn leaves. Below the header is a navigation menu with links for "Duluth City Council Endorsements 2023", "HOME", "Legislative Action", "Saint Paul Council Endorsements 2023", "Issues", and "Calendar". A search icon is also present. Below the navigation menu, there are links for "Our Resolutions", "Blog", and "About".

The main content area includes a "Spread the love" section with social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and a plus sign for more options. To the right of this section are two prominent green buttons: "Join the Caucus" and "Donate". Below the "Donate" button, there is a link: "Donate to the Caucus by clicking [HERE](#)." A note states: "You will be directed to the Act Blue Website where we accept donations to our caucus." Further down, a paragraph explains: "We use the money you donate to, among other things, develop and share educational materials, attend events where we educate the public and the DFL about environmental issues, promote the individuals we endorse for office and hold informational forums and poster sessions." At the bottom right, there is a link: "Visit The DFLEC Blog->br> Campaigns and Candidates (1)".

The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the system tray with the date "1/28/2024" and time "2:32 PM". The system tray also includes icons for network, volume, and power. The taskbar includes the Start button, a search bar, and several application icons.

# Protect Groundwater Quality

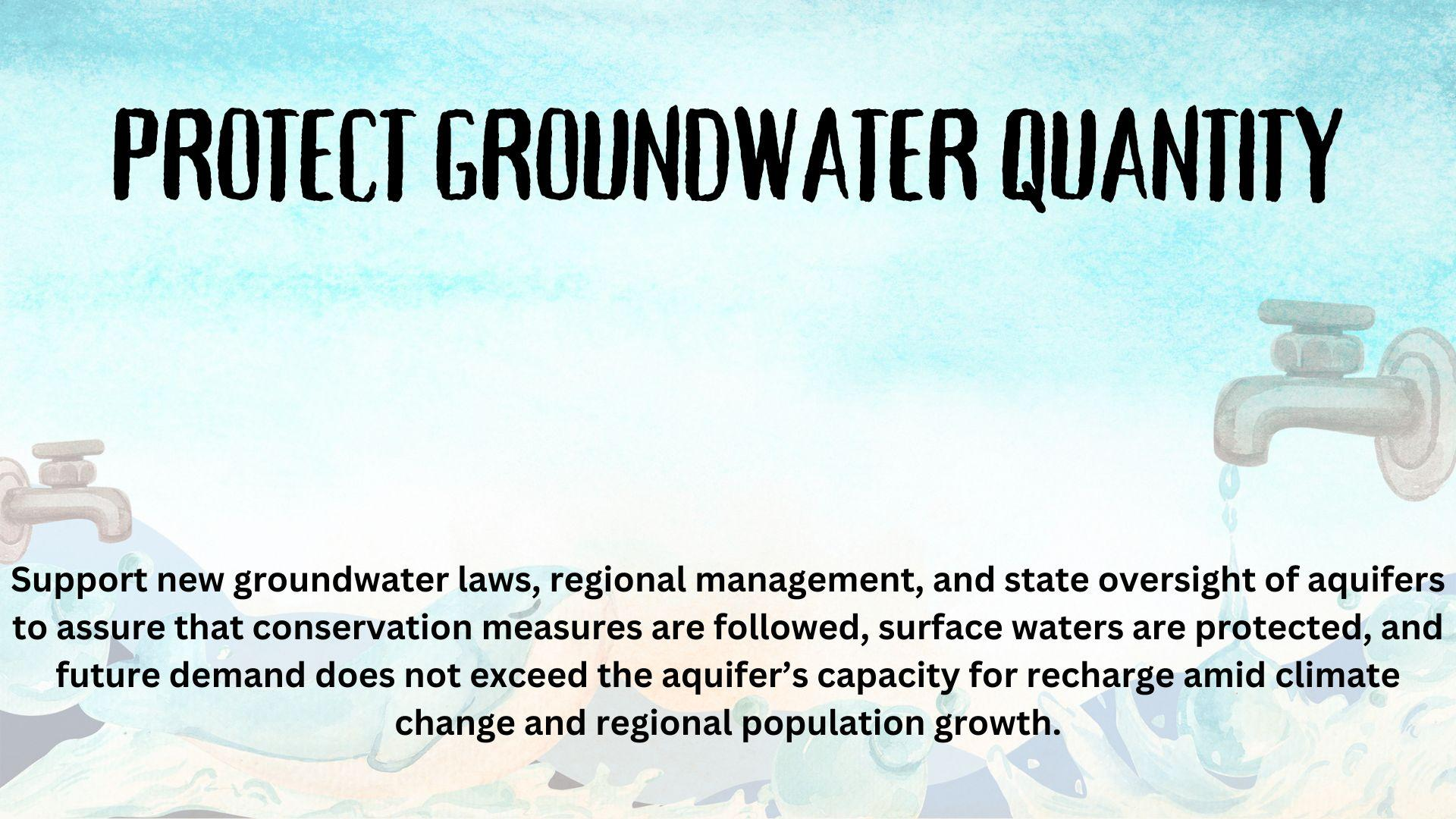
**Support protecting the health of MN private well owners from the hazards of contaminated water by providing free water testing and safe alternative sources of drinking water or water treatment systems for impacted wells, because everyone deserves clean, healthy water.**

# Protect Groundwater Quality



- Nitrate contamination of groundwater is common in several agricultural regions of Minnesota, especially in the SE Karst Region, and is getting worse.
- Because recovery rates from nitrate contamination can take many decades, active remediation practices need to be developed.
- Many other contaminants, such as PFAS and arsenic, are harmful at very low concentrations.
- Municipal water supplies are regularly tested but private wells are not so homeowners often do not know if their water is contaminated or not.

# PROTECT GROUNDWATER QUANTITY



**Support new groundwater laws, regional management, and state oversight of aquifers to assure that conservation measures are followed, surface waters are protected, and future demand does not exceed the aquifer's capacity for recharge amid climate change and regional population growth.**



# PROTECT GROUNDWATER QUANTITY

- Groundwater provides 70% of Minnesota's drinking water and virtually all of our agricultural irrigation water.
- Because groundwater is “invisible”, it tends to be ignored, but groundwater depletion is occurring in several areas within Minnesota.
- Current groundwater withdrawal laws are outdated and are failing to protect aquifers in the face of growing irrigation, increasing municipal use, and climate change.
- Ongoing experiences with groundwater governance in the Metro Region, in several rural basins of Minnesota, and in other states can be used to inform the development of new groundwater management districts.
- Allocation of groundwater that prioritizes existing uses and fairly allocates allocations among users.

# No New Fossil Fuels

**For new infrastructure projects, mandate the calculation of climate impacts including external and social costs of carbon; deny funding or permits for high impact projects and incentivize those with no significant carbon footprint; transition from existing fossil fuel-based infrastructure as quickly as possible.**



# No New Fossil Fuels

- The International Energy Agency (IEA) recently published its flagship report titled “Net Zero by 2050”, and the verdict is clear. No new fossil fuel expansion projects can be built in order to get to net zero emissions by 2050 and keep temperatures under 1.5 Degree C of warming.
- A recent study showed we’ve already installed enough fossil fuel infrastructure to commit to more than 1.5 degrees Celsius of planetary warming, even without new planned installations.
- We should not rely on carbon capture, geoengineering, or offsets as alternatives to reducing emissions in our strategy to limit warming.
- Putting a price on carbon will make the polluters pay and drive the economy to cleaner, renewable sources. Economists agree this is the most effective way to dramatically reduce emissions while protecting low and middle income families.



Declare a climate emergency and support a Green New Deal to provide a just energy future in which all Minnesotans can reap the health and economic benefits of efficiency programs, renewable electricity, and clean energy jobs. Mandate the use of union labor in development of new energy infrastructure.



- Major changes in technology make opportunities for the wealthy and exploit the working class and poor.
- The GND proposes an aggressive and comprehensive attack on climate change while simultaneously shaping that change to enhance the economies and conditions of life for everyone, equitably.
- Will the energy transition that we all want and work for make the rich richer and the poor poorer?

- The Green New Deal says:

Not this time! —

**GREEN**  
**NEW DEAL**



# Prove It First

**Support the Minnesota Legislature holding a hearing on the proposed Prove It First legislation, and support the Governor directing the DNR to withhold all applied for permits for copper nickel sulfide mines in Minnesota until it can first be proven that such mines can be operated safely in our water-rich environment and not violate state, federal, and tribal water quality standards.**

# **Prove It First:**

## **Copper-Nickel Sulfide Mining**

- **Copper-nickel sulfide mining has never been done in Minnesota and is the most polluting industry in the United States.**
- **This type of toxic mining produces sulfuric acid (battery acid) and is much different than taconite mining.**
- **Proposed sulfide mines threaten the Boundary Waters, Lake Superior, and the Mississippi River watershed.**
- **Minnesota is the land of 10,000 lakes and sky-blue water. Clean water is our heritage and our most important natural resource. Sulfide mining threatens our clean water and our heritage.**
- **If they cannot point to one example where sulfide mining has not polluted, then why would we do it here in Minnesota?**



# Clean Transportation



**Support development of sustainable transportation in all areas of the state, including safe pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, mass transit improvements, streetcars, commuter rail, light rail, and buses, reduction of air travel emissions, and charging stations for electric vehicles.**



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# Clean Transportation

- The transportation sector has taken over as the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. We need to reduce vehicle miles traveled by providing alternative options including safe routes for biking and walking, and electrifying the remaining miles.
- Governor Walz should sign the Multi-State Medium-and Heavy-Duty Zero Emission Vehicle Memorandum of Understanding.
- Expanding transportation options leads to greater equity for all Minnesotans.
- Infrastructure to support and allow the easy use of electric vehicles and electrified public transportation, including expanded passenger rail, should be deployed equitably across the state so all have access.
- Expanding Minnesota's transportation infrastructure will create jobs.
- Improved and expanded transportation options will reduce the cost of living for many individuals and boost the quality of life in Minnesota communities.



# Environmental Justice



**Support protections and provide funding for environmental justice communities statewide from pollution, extreme heat, and other environmental harms, and ensure that these communities' voices are fully included in permitting decisions that impact them.**

# Environmental Justice

- Minnesota's communities of color, low-income communities, and tribal nations have been disproportionately impacted by environmental health hazards due to being treated as "sacrifice zones" for polluting industries and infrastructure.
- Examples: the routing of I-94 in Saint Paul through the predominantly Black Rondo neighborhood, the state's most concentrated air pollution in the diverse East Phillips neighborhood in Minneapolis, or the destruction of wild rice and fish resources in Indigenous treaty lands.
- These communities have generally had little voice in the siting of these sources of pollution. State and local agencies have treated industries as their primary clients, rather than listening to the people who live there.
- Minnesota policy should seek to support and protect these vulnerable communities from existing environmental harms and center their voices on the front end of major permitting decisions, not as an afterthought.

# **Pharmaceutical Pollution**

**Support extended producer responsibility for the management of waste pharmaceuticals and packaging to protect water quality for wildlife and human health.**

# Pharmaceutical Pollution

- Humans and wildlife need fresh, clean water for drinking, life and recreation and pharmaceutical residues have been found in surface waters,
- Sources include manufacturing, residential disposal, healthcare disposal and excretion,
- Scientifically vetted studies indicate anywhere from 0.5%->70% of pharmaceuticals administered are excreted into wastewater systems,
- Pharmaceutical waste packaging contributes to the problem, for example, many containers could be re-used for ongoing medications,
- Since 2010 DEA has collected 8650 tons of unused, expired and waste pharmaceuticals. Disposal is paid by taxpayers.

# Reduce Plastic Waste

**Enact Extended Producer Responsibility for plastic packaging requiring producers to collect 70% of the plastic packaging they generate within five years and reduce the plastic packaging they produce by 50% within ten years. Prohibit ALL toxic substances and materials in plastic packaging.**

# Reduce Plastic Waste

- **Plastic Pollution continues to be a environmental concern worldwide.**
- **Change is needed at every level.**
- **The EPA defines containers and packaging as products that are assumed to be discarded the same year the products are purchased and are used to wrap or protect goods, including, food and beverages.**
- **Extended producer responsibility (EPR) is a policy approach that assigns producers greater responsibility for the end-of-life management of the products they introduce to the market and encourages innovations in product design.**
- **EPR can encourage corporations to initiative change when it comes to plastic packaging pollution.**
- **Prohibiting toxic substances in plastic packaging is common sense. There are hundreds of chemicals used in making plastic, most are derived from fossil fuels, several are toxic.**



# Indigenous Rights

Support Indigenous tribes' rights to self-government, including the generation of revenue to serve their people and the protection of the natural resources they depend on.

# Indigenous Rights

- The land that makes up Minnesota was taken by white settlers from the Dakota, Anishinaabe, and Ho-Chunk peoples through violence and coercion, often in violation of the treaties between these tribal communities and the federal government.
- These treaties, which guarantee the tribes their self-government and the protection of the natural resources their health and cultures depend on, are the law of the land.
- Minnesota's state and local governments must honor these treaties and not make policy decisions that could violate these treaty rights, which include but are not limited to the generation of revenue and the ability to safely fish, hunt, and gather resources on treaty lands.

# **OPPOSE ROLLBACKS**

- **AMEND THE ONGING PLATFORM:**

**OPPOSE ANY EFFORT TO CIRCUMVENT OR WEAKEN  
STATE OR FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS OR  
PROTECTIONS INVOLVING ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES  
AND PERMITTING.**

# OPPOSE ROLLBACKS

- **HUNDREDS OF ENVIRONMENTAL RULES AND POLICIES WERE WEAKENED OR ADMINISTRATIVELY REMOVED BY THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION**
- **EVERY LEGISLATIVE AND CONGRESSIONAL SESSION SEES CORPORATE- BACKED EFFORTS. DRIVEN BY MEMBERS OF BOTH MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES. TO GUT THE PROTECTIONS THAT KEEP US SAFE FROM POLLUTION.**
- **AS WE GRAPPLE WITH CLIMATE CHANGE. WE CANNOT AFFORD ROLLBACKS OR INADEQUATE ENFORCEMENT OF OUR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS**



# Commonsense Protection for Public Lands

Support common sense measures, including adequate buffer zones, signage, and environmental assessments, to protect and preserve habitat and waters on public lands from off road vehicle (e.g., ATVs) impacts.

# Commonsense Protections for Public Lands

- Multi-million dollar trail expansion is in progress, including three DNR statewide Master Plans (for ATV, ORV, OHM-motorcycles). These trails would be in addition to the almost 4,000 miles of currently known legal trails on state and federal lands. It does not include county mileage.
- No true cost-benefit analysis for these trails has been done that includes the costs of road maintenance, emergency services, enforcement, environmental damage, and impacts to other forms of recreation.
- ORVs introduce and distribute invasive species through seed dispersal. The spread of terrestrial invasives is a multi-billion dollar burden on the state, and the availability of medicinal herbs and foraged plants is diminished with invasive species.
- DNR's 2008 Trail Planning, Design & Development Guidelines are voluntary, unenforceable, and also state trails should not be modified to reduce ecological impact if it would diminish the value to the targeted user.

# **PRESERVE MINNESOTA'S NATURAL SPACES**

**SUPPORT ACCELERATED ACTION TO PROTECT, RESTORE, AND IMPROVE  
MANAGEMENT OF FORESTS, PRAIRIE, AND WETLANDS TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE  
AND PRESERVE NATURAL PLACES FOR PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE.**

# Precautionary Principle

**Require newly developed substances to be proven safe before widespread manufacture and use and support the banning of toxic and carcinogenic substances, such as PFAS, in consumer goods.**



# Precautionary Principle

- Our current system allows corporations to introduce chemicals without the burden of proving that they are safe – it is on regulators that have to prove that the chemicals are harmful.
- Minnesota and the United States should introduce the precautionary principle in regulating new chemicals – ensuring that harm is prevented beforehand rather than addressed afterward. It would require corporations to prove that their new substances are safe prior to approval for widespread use.
- Research is needed to better understand sources of trace contaminants like PFAS and pharmaceuticals so they can be effectively controlled before they enter surface water and groundwater.

# Restore the MPCA Board

**Support the reestablishment of the MPCA Citizens' Board to ensure Minnesotans are represented in major environmental decision making.**

# Restore the MPCA Board

- For decades, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency was overseen by a public Citizens' Board that could review, study, and potentially alter major permitting decisions made by the MPCA based on public health and other environmental concerns.
- After it ordered a thorough environmental review of a large dairy project, this Board was eliminated by a Republican-controlled Legislature at the last minute with no public discussion.
- A bill to restore and enhance the Board was introduced by DFLers in the Legislature in the 2023 session but was not passed into law. This bill should be reintroduced and passed by the Legislature.

# Divestment



**Support the divestment from fossil fuel holdings by the Minnesota State Board of Investment to protect the pensions of Minnesota civil servants and educators from financial risk and to help move our economy to clean energy sources.**



# Divestment

- Besides the obvious moral argument for divestment, the financial risk of continued investment in fossil fuel funds makes this a poor investment. These assets will become stranded assets and of little value as we move away from fossil fuels to a clean energy economy.
- Litigation risks increase as the cost of climate related disasters soar. Local governments are holding energy companies responsible for infrastructure and property damage.
- Governments are also using cap and trade or carbon taxes to reduce greenhouse gas emission. This makes high carbon energy sources more expensive and less profitable, and sends a clear market signal to switch to renewable energy sources. Solar and wind are often less expensive than any other energy option.
- Numerous institutions made divestment announcements recently. The leaders of these institutions declared that they are taking these divestment actions as prudent fund managers. Recent announcements of divestment were made by: New York State Common Retirement Fund, Macalester College, the University of Minnesota, Harvard University, Boston University, the MacArthur Foundation, the Ford Foundation, some California State Universities, and Dartmouth College.



# Sustainable Agriculture

Support funding for research, technical assistance, and education to rapidly implement regenerative farming, establish perennial crops, rotational grazing, cover crops, and no-till farming, to invest in rural communities and our food and farming system, conserve and build healthy soils, clean our water, sequester carbon and bolster farm income.

# Sustainable Agriculture

- Principles of soil health include “armoring the soil” to protect it from erosion and degradation, minimizing disturbance of the soil, increasing and maintaining plant diversity, encouraging healthy roots, and integrating the soil biological activity with livestock.
- Continuous living cover systems along with managed rotational grazing can remove excess carbon from the atmosphere and store it in the soil, build up the soil’s organic carbon, store more water in soil, resulting in less runoff, cleaner water, and more resilient crop fields and pastures.
- On average only about 3% of Minnesota cropland is planted with continuous living cover in a given year. Funding for research, technical assistance, market development, and education is needed to improve this.
- Sustainable agriculture has been shown to increase net profits for individual farms, because costs are reduced while yields remain good. With initial support from the state and supply chain development for sustainable crops, this is achievable for family farmers.


# GET THE LEAD OUT

Support the reduction of lead exposure in people and animals by prohibiting the use of lead ammunition and fishing tackle.





# GET THE LEAD OUT!

- THERE IS NO SAFE LEVEL OF LEAD IN CHILDREN, WITH THEIR HIGHER METABOLISM AND GROWTH ARE PARTICULARLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO THE ILL HEALTH EFFECTS OF LEAD POLLUTION,
  - THE MPCA DOES NOT REGULATE LEAD AT SHOOTING RANGES, THE SPENT AMMO IS LEFT LAYING ON THE GROUND,
  - PEOPLE AT SHOOTING RANGES HAVE LEAD IDENTIFIED IN THEIR BLOOD,
  - THE DNR HAS FAILED TO BAN LEAD IN AMMO AND FISHING TACKLE,
  - STRONG EVIDENCE INDICATES LEAD AMMUNITION AND FISHING TACKLE HAS RESULTED IN HARM AND DEATH TO NUMEROUS WILDLIFE SPECIES INCLUDING BALD EAGLES, COMMON LOONS AND SWANS.
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# Support Organic Waste Diversion



Support Minnesota communities in developing “source-separated organics” (SSO) waste programs to allow diversion of organic wastes from landfills toward productive uses and to conserve landfill space.

- Organic wastes comprise one-third of Minnesota's landfill mass, so diversion would increase the lifespan of landfills, reducing the need for new landfills.
- Organic wastes have value: they are easily converted to compost, used as a feedstock for animal feeds (after drying a sterilization), used to produce methane fuel through anaerobic digestion, and for other purposes.
- A state-wide law would be informed by the experience of 47 Minnesota cities which currently have SSO laws.



# Support Free Electronics Recycling

Support providing free collection of electronic waste for all Minnesotans to increase electronic waste recycling rate to conserve precious metals and keep this material out of traditional waste disposal streams where it causes pollution and endangers workers.



# Support Free Electronics Recycling

- Electronics are highly recyclable, and the metals they contain in Minnesota's e-waste stream are valued at \$3.2 billion dollars annually.
- By creating a collection system that will get us closer to 100% diversion, we can create an estimated 1700 direct jobs in the state of Minnesota, and provide precious metals needed for the clean energy transition.
- Electronic waste (e-waste) contains toxic material such as: lead, mercury, barium, lithium, chromium, polychlorinated biphenyls, and brominated flame retardants create pollution and contribute to environmental injustices if not disposed of properly.
- Landfills have reported fires including one in Rice county that grew to the size of a football field, and burned 30 feet deep. It took almost a week to put out this fire, meanwhile it polluted the air, water and crops for miles.



Download resolutions from [our web page dflenvironment.org](https://dflenvironment.org)  
Bring them with you to Precinct Caucuses on February 27.

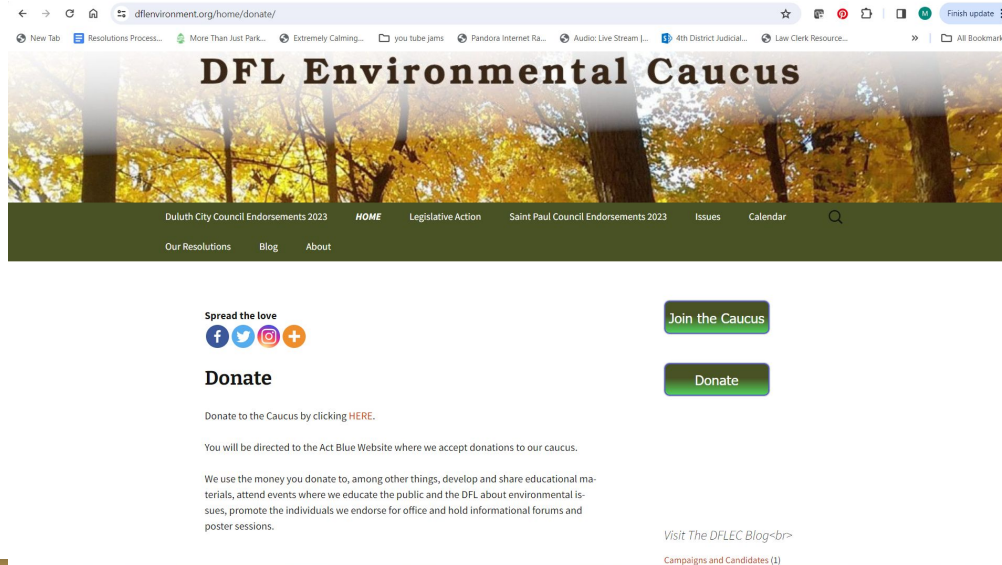
The screenshot shows a web browser displaying the DFL Environmental Caucus website. The browser's address bar shows the URL [dflenvironment.org/2024-dflec-resolutions/](https://dflenvironment.org/2024-dflec-resolutions/). The website features a large banner image of trees with yellow autumn leaves. Below the banner is a navigation menu with the following items: 2024 DFLEC RESOLUTIONS, Home, Legislative Action, Issues, Calendar, Blog, and About. The main content area is titled "2024 DFLEC Resolutions" and includes a "Join the Caucus" button and a "Donate" button. Under the heading "Spread the love", there are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and a plus sign. The resolutions listed are:

- 1 - Protect groundwater quality  
Support protecting the health of MN private well owners from the hazards of contaminated water by providing free water testing and safe alternative sources of drinking water or water treatment systems for impacted wells, because everyone deserves clean, healthy water.
- 2 - Protect groundwater quantity  
Support new groundwater laws, regional management, and state oversight of aquifers to assure that conservation measures are followed, surface waters are protected, and future demand does not exceed the aquifer's capacity to recharge amid climate change and regional population growth.
- 3 - Climate action/no new fossil fuels  
For new infrastructure projects, mandate the calculation of climate impacts including ex-

At the bottom of the page, there are links for "Visit The DFLEC Blog", "Campaigns and Candidates (1)", "Climate Change and Energy Transition (16)", and "Climate Change (7)". The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the date as 1/28/2024 and the time as 10:57 AM.

# What else can I do?

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THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING!

QUESTIONS?