

News Release



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Board of Water and Soil Resources expands options to help farmers meet Buffer Law requirements

ST. PAUL, Minn. – Minnesota farmers will have an additional way of meeting the state’s new Buffer Law requirements as the result of recent action taken by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). Under the Buffer Law, farmers may use alternative water quality protection practices that are comparable to buffer protection. The BWSR Board recently passed a resolution affirming that certification in the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program qualifies as an approved alternative water quality protection practice. This means that farmers who become certified through the program will also be compliant with the state buffer law.

“I applaud the Board of Water and Soil Resources for recognizing the Ag Water Quality Certification Program as an alternative practice to comply with the Buffer Law,” Agriculture Commissioner Dave Frederickson said. “This action demonstrates how the MDA and BWSR are working together to help farmers protect the quality of our state’s precious water resources.”

“The Board took this action because we recognize that the Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program will deliver greater water quality protection than buffers alone,” said BWSR Executive Director John Jaschke. “It allows us to utilize an existing program in a significant way that benefits the State, local governments, and landowners alike.”

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program is a partnership between the United States Department of Agriculture, the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Each of these agencies upholds the program’s regulatory certainty provision and BWSR, through its network of local soil and water conservation districts, is helping deliver the program to farmers and landowners across the state.

Signed into law in June 2015, Governor Mark Dayton’s landmark buffer initiative designated an estimated 110,000 acres of land for water quality buffer strips statewide. The law establishes new perennial vegetation buffers of up to 50 feet along rivers, streams, and ditches that will help filter out phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment. The new law provides flexibility and financial support for landowners to install and maintain buffers, and boost compliance with buffer laws across Minnesota.

To learn more about the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program, visit www.mylandmylegacy.com. For more on Minnesota’s Buffer Law, visit <http://bwsr.state.mn.us/buffers>.

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