



For Immediate Release – May 22, 2019

Highway Departments Steamroll Endangered Plant Law

Endangered plants, located within Minnesota's 135,000+ miles of public road right-of-ways, will soon be legally subject to steamrollers, graders, and mowers, without consequence, if a proposed law is passed by the Minnesota Legislature this session. For this, thank the Minnesota County Engineers Association and Association of Minnesota Counties, whose intractable persistence steamrolled all opposition, including the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

The county engineers said they needed to "clarify" Minnesota's endangered species law, which they claim already exempts roadways and ditches from the law. However, the purported "clarification" actually expands the exemption to the entire right-of-way, including backslopes and medians. Delay and costs are claimed as reasons, but are not adequately explained.

This huge step backward is contrary to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), which states: "... around **1 million animal and plant** species are **now threatened with extinction**, many within decades, more than ever before in human history."

The Minnesota County Engineers Association and the Association of Minnesota Counties are on the wrong side of history, by continuing to advocate for a road right-of-way exemption from the MN endangered species law. Minnesotans must advocate to the Minnesota Legislature to protect endangered plants and repeal the road right-of-way exemption.

Sincerely yours,

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