November 1, 2013

Annie Felix-Gerth
Pesticide and Fertilizer Management Division
Minnesota Department of Agriculture
625 Robert Street North
St. Paul, MN, 55155

Dear Ms. Felix-Gerth,

I write as the chief Senate author of the 1989 Groundwater Protection Act in support of the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy's request that the Department of Agriculture move forward at this time to develop water resource protection requirements in order to prevent further degradation of the state's groundwater resources.

In 1989 when the Legislature passed the Groundwater Protection Act, our objective was to halt the pollution from agricultural activities and prevent future degradation of groundwater resources. The statute provides an opportunity to begin with voluntary measures, but should these prove ineffective, rules prescribing specific practices were expected to be put in place in a timely manner to meet the state's groundwater degradation prevention goal. The statute explicitly authorized the Department to implement such rules in order to prevent further degradation of groundwater.

As set out in the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy's comment letter, the voluntary best management practices that have been pursued since the law was adopted nearly 25 years ago, have not had the desired effect. Minnesota's groundwater resources are becoming further polluted from agricultural activity. It is time for the Department to prepare and adopt mandatory rules to ensure this resource is restored and protected for future generations.

Sincerely,

Steve Morse
Chief Senate Author of the Groundwater Protection Act