

# How to write your legislators about the continuing spread of AIS - Starry Stonewort in MN Lakes & Rivers

## Who represents you?

You should write the legislator who represents you. You can find out who represents you by clicking [HERE](#).

## Sample Letters

Legislators pay little or no attention to mass mailed post cards or form letters. Use these letters as a starting point, but tell your story in your own words, as this will have the biggest impact.

The best way to get your legislator's attention is with a short, well-reasoned letter.

Some suggestion when writing:

- Make letter neat and easy to read (type or print).
- Identify the issue at the top of the letter and if possible, identify the specific piece of legislation by House or Senate file number before writing.
- Be brief; never write more than one page. Get to the point quickly i.e., "I hope you will support (oppose) House File \_\_\_\_\_"
- Succinctly state your reasons for supporting or opposing the bill. Use terms they will understand and avoid abbreviations. Be polite and reasonable.
- Finally, say "thanks" and sign your own name in handwriting. Include your home phone number and address so the legislator can verify you are a constituent, and hopefully, respond.

Here is a sample letter you can use to help get you started writing to tax committee members:

## Together We Can Stop the Spread of the AIS Starry Stonewort in Minnesota

Dear Sen. or Rep. (Name here):

I am writing in response to the new spread of Starry Stonewort in Minnesota. This AIS started started in Lake Koronis in 2015 and is now spreading to other lakes thruout MN.

Oversight of the implementation of existing AIS laws is critically needed. We must use this crisis to create, implement and fund a comprehensive statewide plan to address not only Starry Stonewort but also Asian Carp, zebra mussels, spiny water flea, round goby and even viruses like VHS as well as species and threats not even know yet. And then we must continue to monitor the results and demand effective implementation. As a legislator, you are in a much better position to do this than I.

The discoveries of Starry Stonewort in Minnesota Lakes & Rivers needs your action. Thousands of lakes are unprotected from this AIS which no effect treatment has been found to control it. We can be successful, but we need your urgent commitment.

- We need a statewide framework to address the AIS issue at a watershed, region and intra-state level. Locals have been doing heroic work as a stop gap for years, but only a watershed approach will not stop the spread. Local Governments, Counties and Lake Associations must be coordinated and funded at the watershed level for programs to be successful. Watershed's and therefore Starry Stonewort cross political boundaries. Only with a large scale approach can we be successful.
- Greater cooperation between agencies, including partnerships between DNR and Department of Transportation, USFS, USGS and US Wildlife to set up inspection and decontamination stations at Minnesota lakes around the state.
- Create a meaningful intra-State panel to coordinate AIS efforts between States, at a regional level.
- Reliable, dedicated and adequate funding - local communities, counties and lakeshore owners simply do not have the resources to meet this challenge. The State must step up to protect the state's waters.
- Too much is at stake - we can and must stop the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species, AIS in Minnesota. And finally, the explosion of lakes infested with Starry Stonewort, is a signal that we have reached a tipping point. Unless we make real gains on the problem this year, far too much of Minnesota's water heritage and resource will be lost.

Local property owners, desperately imposing Lake Improvement Districts, LIDs - essentially taxing themselves, to stop this threat. They spend as much or more than the state each year. They cannot continue to go it alone. The state must step up to protect our Lakes.

Please work to improve the current AIS legislation.

Thank you for all your hard work on my behalf. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

(your name, address, phone number)