



Legislation Text

File #: 20-0275R, **Version:** 1

AUTHORIZING APPLICATION TO THE US ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE FOR GRANT FUNDING FOR ACQUISITION AND RESTORATION OF ECOLOGICALLY VALUABLE TAX FORFEIT PROPERTY ALONG THE ST. LOUIS RIVER AND DEVELOPMENT OF A CITYWIDE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN.

CITY PROPOSAL: WHEREAS, The City of the Duluth wishes to acquire and restore ecologically valuable lands in the St. Louis River Public Lands Area (EXHIBIT A) and one parcel on Park Point known as Pontliana Woods which are highly valued for their ecological benefits; and

WHEREAS, The US Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (USEPA GLRI) has invited a noncompetitive grant application from the City for funds to acquire up to 535 acres of ecologically valuable tax forfeited lands along the St. Louis River, subject to a commitment from St. Louis County to sell those lands for 20% of their estimated market value; and

WHEREAS, The St. Louis County Board will vote on March 24 to preliminary commit to the sale of up to 535 acres of tax forfeit land in the St. Louis River target area and one parcel on Park Point for 20% of their estimated market value; and

WHEREAS, the City wishes to develop an inter-agency Natural Resource Management and Protection Plan (NRMPP) to help the City and its' agency partners prioritize and strategize data collection and analysis, land acquisition, and on-the-ground restoration projects and define a sustainable framework to monitor and manage the City's natural resources; and

WHEREAS, the City wishes to continue removal of invasive plants and regrowth of native plants on several hundred acres of ecologically valuable land along the river..

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Duluth hereby supports the submission of an application for \$900,000 to the USEPA GLRI including \$700,000 towards the acquisition up to 535 acres of tax forfeit lands associated with the St. Louis River, \$125,000 towards the city-wide NRMPP and, \$75,000 toward further restoration of native plant communities.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: This resolution authorizes application to the US Environmental Protection Agency Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (USEPA GLRI) for \$900,000 to acquire up to 535 acres of ecologically valuable tax forfeit land along the St. Louis River for 20% of the estimated market value, restore native plant species on public lands along the river, and develop a City-wide management plan to guide how the City and agency partners prioritize and pursue data collection and analysis, land acquisition, on-the-ground restoration projects, monitoring, and management on City-owned green space. The land acquisition funded by this grant would advance Open Space Policy Two in the Imagine Duluth 2035 Comprehensive Plan which directs the City to examine the optimum use of all tax forfeit green space in Duluth and permanently protect that majority portion that has high ecological and recreational value and little or no development value.