

# Bill includes augmentation study

ST. PAUL — Lawmakers passed, and Gov. Mark Dayton signed, the omnibus agriculture and environment bill in special session, which included \$100,000 to obtain cost estimates for augmenting water levels in White Bear Lake.

The Department of Natural Resources, in cooperation with the Metropolitan Council, will look at the cost feasibility of augmenting White Bear Lake from the Sucker Lake Chain of Lakes. This chain of lakes is fed by the Mississippi River and advocates believe it may be the most viable option. However, the current cost estimates have a huge range — anywhere from \$15 million to \$55 million.

Part of the goal of this study is to narrow that range and get a better idea of what the actual end price tag would cost.

The DNR commissioner must submit a report with cost estimates to the chairs and ranking minority member of the House of Representatives and Senate committees with jurisdiction over environment and natural resources policy and finance by Feb. 1, 2016.

This is a one-time appropriation.

— *Debra Neutkens*