

298.2961 PRODUCER GRANTS.

Subdivision 1. **Appropriation.** (a) \$10,000,000 is appropriated from the Douglas J. Johnson economic protection trust fund to a special account in the taconite area environmental protection fund for grants to producers on a project-by-project basis as provided in this section.

(b) The proceeds of the tax designated under section 298.28, subdivision 9b, are appropriated for grants to producers on a project-by-project basis as provided in this section.

Subd. 2. **Projects; approval.** (a) Projects funded must be for:

(1) environmentally unique reclamation projects; or

(2) pit or plant repairs, expansions, or modernizations other than for a value added iron products plant.

(b) To be proposed by the board, a project must be approved by at least eight Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board members. The money for a project may be spent only upon approval of the project by the governor. The board may submit supplemental projects for approval at any time.

(c) The board may require that it receive an equity percentage in any project to which it contributes under this section.

Subd. 3. **Redistribution.** (a) If a taconite production facility is sold after operations at the facility had ceased, any money remaining in the taconite environmental fund for the former producer may be released to the purchaser of the facility on the terms otherwise applicable to the former producer under this section.

(b) Any portion of the taconite environmental fund that is not released by the commissioner within three years of its deposit in the taconite environmental fund shall be divided between the taconite environmental protection fund created in section 298.223 and the Douglas J. Johnson economic protection trust fund created in section 298.292 for placement in their respective special accounts. Two-thirds of the unreleased funds must be distributed to the taconite environmental protection fund and one-third to the Douglas J. Johnson economic protection trust fund.

Subd. 4. **Grant and loan fund.** (a) A fund is established to receive distributions under section 298.28, subdivision 9b, and to make grants or loans as provided in this subdivision. Any grant or loan made under this subdivision must be approved by a majority of the members of the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board, established under section 298.22.

(b) Distributions received in calendar year 2005 are allocated to the city of Virginia for improvements and repairs to the city's steam heating system.

(c) Distributions received in calendar year 2006 are allocated to a project of the public utilities commissions of the cities of Hibbing and Virginia to convert their electrical generating plants to the use of biomass products, such as wood.

(d) Distributions received in calendar year 2007 must be paid to the city of Tower to be used for the East Two Rivers project in or near the city of Tower.

(e) For distributions received in 2008, the first \$2,000,000 of the 2008 distribution must be paid to St. Louis County for deposit in its county road and bridge fund to be used for relocation of St. Louis County Road 715, commonly referred to as Pike River Road. The remainder of the 2008 distribution must be paid to St. Louis County for a grant to the city of Virginia for connecting sewer and water lines to the St. Louis County maintenance garage on Highway 135, further extending the lines to interconnect with the city of Gilbert's sewer and water lines. All distributions received in 2009 and subsequent years are allocated for projects under section 298.223, subdivision 1.

Subd. 5. Public works and local economic development fund. For distributions in 2007 only, a special fund is established to receive 38.4 cents per ton that otherwise would be allocated under section 298.28, subdivision 6. The following amounts are allocated to St. Louis County acting as the fiscal agent for the recipients for the specific purposes:

(1) 13.4 cents per ton for the Central Iron Range Sanitary Sewer District for construction of a combined wastewater facility and notwithstanding section 298.28, subdivision 11, paragraph (a), or any other law, interest accrued on this money while held by St. Louis County shall also be distributed to the recipient;

(2) six cents per ton to the city of Eveleth to redesign and design and construct improvements to renovate its water treatment facility;

(3) one cent per ton for the East Range Joint Powers Board to acquire land for and to design a central wastewater collection and treatment system;

(4) 0.5 cents per ton to the city of Hoyt Lakes to repair Leeds Road;

(5) 0.7 cents per ton to the city of Virginia to extend Eighth Street South;

(6) 0.7 cents per ton to the city of Mountain Iron to repair Hoover Road;

(7) 0.9 cents per ton to the city of Gilbert for alley repairs between Michigan and Indiana Avenues and for repayment of a loan to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development;

(8) 0.4 cents per ton to the city of Keewatin for a new city well;

(9) 0.3 cents per ton to the city of Grand Rapids for planning for a fire and hazardous materials center;

(10) 0.9 cents per ton to Aitkin County Growth for an economic development project for peat harvesting;

(11) 0.4 cents per ton to the city of Nashwauk to develop a comprehensive city plan;

(12) 0.4 cents per ton to the city of Taconite for development of a city comprehensive plan;

(13) 0.3 cents per ton to the city of Marble for water and sewer infrastructure;

(14) 0.8 cents per ton to Aitkin County for improvements to the Long Lake Environmental Learning Center;

(15) 0.3 cents per ton to the city of Coleraine for the Coleraine Technology Center;

(16) 0.5 cents per ton to the Economic Development Authority of the city of Grand Rapids for planning for the North Central Research and Technology Laboratory;

(17) 0.6 cents per ton to the city of Bovey for sewer and water extension;

(18) 0.3 cents per ton to the city of Calumet for infrastructure improvements; and

(19) ten cents per ton to the commissioner of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation for deposit in a Highway 1 Corridor Account established by the commissioner, to be distributed by the commissioner to any of the cities of Babbitt, Cook, Ely, or Tower, for economic development projects approved by the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board; notwithstanding section 298.28, subdivision 11, paragraph (a), or any other law, interest accrued on this money while held by St. Louis County or the commissioner shall also be distributed to the recipient.

History: 1996 c 471 art 12 s 8; 1997 c 231 art 8 s 11; 1Sp2001 c 5 art 6 s 33; 2003 c 127 art 11 s 11,12; 1Sp2005 c 1 art 4 s 91; 2006 c 259 art 12 s 12,13; 2008 c 154 art 8 s 13,14; 2008 c 363 art 10 s 21