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State of Minnesota
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTY-FIFTH
SESSION

HOUSE FILE NO. **2144**

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The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to environment; creating an ombudsman in the Pollution Control Agency
1.3 for water pollution education and assistance; proposing coding for new law in
1.4 Minnesota Statutes, chapter 116.

1.5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.6 Section 1. [116.20] OMBUDSMAN FOR WATER POLLUTION EDUCATION
1.7 AND ASSISTANCE.

1.8 Subdivision 1. **Appointment.** The Pollution Control Agency shall appoint an
1.9 ombudsman for groundwater pollution education and assistance in the classified service.

1.10 Subd. 2. **Duties.** The ombudsman's duties include, but are not limited to:

1.11 (1) providing education and assistance to the general public on any aspect of
1.12 groundwater pollution;

1.13 (2) disseminating information on the financing and program funding sources for
1.14 cleanup and restoration of groundwater pollution;

1.15 (3) monitoring, reviewing, and providing comments and recommendations to
1.16 federal, state, and local groundwater quality authorities on laws and regulations;

1.17 (4) providing information to federal, state, and local groundwater quality authorities
1.18 and the public on the requirements of the Clean Water Act;

1.19 (5) disseminating information concerning proposed state groundwater quality
1.20 regulations, control technologies, and other information to small businesses, property
1.21 owners, and other interested parties;

1.22 (6) participating in and sponsoring meetings and conferences concerning
1.23 groundwater quality laws and regulations with state and local regulatory officials, industry
1.24 groups, and the public;

2.1 (7) investigating and assisting in the resolution of complaints and disputes from the
2.2 public against state or local groundwater quality authorities or responsible parties;

2.3 (8) arranging for and assisting in the preparation of groundwater quality program
2.4 guideline documents to ensure that the language is readily understandable by the lay
2.5 person;

2.6 (9) establishing cooperative programs with trade associations and small businesses
2.7 to promote and achieve voluntary compliance with federal and state groundwater quality
2.8 laws and regulations; and

2.9 (10) performing the ombudsman's duties in cooperation and coordination with
2.10 governmental entities and private organizations as appropriate so as to eliminate overlap
2.11 and duplication to the extent practicable.

2.12 Subd. 3. **Independence of action.** In carrying out the duties under this section, the
2.13 ombudsman may act independently of the agency in providing testimony to the legislature,
2.14 contacting and making periodic reports to federal and state officials as necessary to carry
2.15 out the duties under this section, and addressing problems of concern to the public.

2.16 Subd. 4. **Qualifications.** The ombudsman must be knowledgeable about federal
2.17 and state water quality laws and regulations, control technologies, and federal and state
2.18 legislative and regulatory processes. The ombudsman must be experienced in dealing
2.19 with both private enterprise and governmental entities, arbitration and negotiation,
2.20 interpretation of laws and regulations, investigation, record keeping, report writing, public
2.21 speaking, and management.

2.22 Subd. 5. **Office support.** The agency shall provide the ombudsman with the
2.23 necessary office space, supplies, equipment, and clerical support to effectively perform the
2.24 duties under this section.