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DINNER CRUISE: Coming to White Bear Lake PAGE 14A

Augmentation bills in committee

BY DEBRA NEUTKENS
EDITOR

ST. PAUL — As promised, bills requesting augmentation money from bonding funds were introduced March 17. The amount of the request to the state Legislature, however, is still blank.

The Senate bill, SF 2917, was co-authored by Sen. Chuck Wiger and Sen. David Senjem, who is ranking minority member. It was referred to the capital investment committee chaired by Sen. LeRoy Stumpf with Vice Chair Sen. Bev Scalze. Scalze, who represents District 42, went on record at a March 2 Vadnais Heights City Council workshop as not being in favor of the multimillion-dollar project.

Rep. Matt Dean's companion bill in the House, HF 3314, was co-authored by Reps. Peter Fischer, Denny McNamara, Leon Lillie, Rod Hamilton, Dennis Smith and Joe Schomacker. The House bill for water level restoration funding was referred to the environment and natural resources policy and finance committee.

The White Bear Lake City Council discussed status of the legislation at its March 22 meeting, pointing out the missing number behind the dollar sign.

AUGMENTATION: Water level funding on tap

FROM PAGE 1A

City Manager Ellen Richter told council the figure will likely be a negotiated number based on reports from the two engineering firms estimating project costs. "It will be in the hands of the bills' authors," she said.

That bothered Councilman Kevin Edberg, who worries that other concerns like water quality aren't being adequately

addressed upfront.

Councilman Dan Jones pointed out that the lake level issue has been ongoing since 2008. "We (the lake) should be full by the time this [pipeline] is producing," he said.

Jones added he is also getting "more than a few" calls from residents about the beach at Ramsey County Park. He asked staff to talk to the county about opening the beach now that the lake "is filling back up."