

# Aquatic invasive species guidelines draft feedback summary

## Overview

Hennepin County is finalizing the process of updating its aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention aid guidelines for a five-year period beginning in 2026. These guidelines help direct how the county spends state funding to work on preventing the introduction or limiting the spread of AIS.

A draft of the 2026-2030 guidelines was shared with 2,477 stakeholders in October with the opportunity to provide feedback via a survey and participate in an online meeting with county staff to hear an overview of the guidelines, ask questions, and share feedback. The county received 13 survey responses, and five participants attended the meeting to provide final comments on the draft.

## Purpose of the survey

The survey offered an opportunity for stakeholders to provide specific feedback after reviewing the draft guidelines. The survey sought to understand and hear from stakeholders on the following:

- How clear the county's draft AIS prevention aid guidelines for 2026-2030 are and what needs clarification.
- How stakeholders participated in the county's stakeholder engagement process.
- Satisfaction with the county's stakeholder engagement process and recommendations for the county's stakeholder engagement the next time the county updates their AIS prevention aid guidelines.
- The survey respondent's role in taking the survey.

## What we heard

### How clear are Hennepin County's draft AIS prevention aid guidelines for 2026-2030?

Overall, 92% of the survey respondents indicated that the county's draft AIS prevention aid guidelines for 2026-2030 were clear and 62% indicated that the guidelines were very clear.

- Very clear – 62% (8 respondents)
- Moderately clear – 8% (1 respondent)

- Slightly clear – 23% (3 respondents)
- Not at all clear – 8% (1 respondent)

### **Ways stakeholders participated in the engagement to inform the development of the county's draft AIS prevention aid guidelines for 2026-2030 (respondents selected all that applied)**

Most of the survey respondents participated in the county's stakeholder engagement efforts and many of them participated in multiple ways. The most common way these respondents participated was by completing a survey at the beginning of the engagement process (69%).

- Visited the project website to stay informed – 46% (6 respondents)
- Completed a survey – 69% (9 respondents)
- Read the survey summary – 46% (6 respondents)
- Participated in a focus group or provided detailed feedback in writing – 38% (5 respondents)
- Read the focus group summary – 46% (6 respondents)
- Did not participate – 23% (3 respondents)

### **Satisfaction with the county's stakeholder engagement in developing the draft AIS prevention aid guidelines for 2026-2030**

Overall, 75% of the survey respondents reported satisfaction with the county's stakeholder engagement in developing the draft AIS prevention aid guidelines for 2026-2030.

- Completely satisfied – 25% (3 respondents)
- Very satisfied – 17% (2 respondents)
- Moderately satisfied – 25% (3 respondents)
- Slightly satisfied – 8% (1 respondent)
- Not at all satisfied – 25% (3 respondents)

### **Role in taking the survey**

Most of the survey respondents were residents of Hennepin County (69%) and work with, volunteer with, or are a member of a lake association and/or other community-based water organization (69%).

- Resident of Hennepin County – 69% (9 respondents)
- Work for a business or industry in Hennepin County that is impacted by water and/or AIS policy – 23% (3 respondents)
- Work for local, state, or federal government on water and/or AIS issues – 15% (2 respondents)
- Work for an educational institution (school, university, etc.) – 15% (2 respondents)
- Work for a news or media organization – 8% (1 respondent)
- Work with, volunteer with, or are a member of a lake association and/or other community-based water organization – 69% (9 respondents)
- Work with, volunteer with, or are a member of an outdoor recreation, wildlife or other mission-driven organization – 31% (4 respondents)
- Other – 15% (2 respondents)

### **Online meeting**

Five of the stakeholders who took the survey attended the meeting with county staff to hear an overview of the guidelines, ask questions, and share feedback. Their feedback mirrored what was shared in the survey.

## Action taken

### Updates to AIS prevention aid guidelines based on stakeholder comments

The county received nine specific comments on the guidelines. Edits to expand or clarify were made to the guidelines based on this feedback:

- A respondent indicated that the draft guidelines did not include the county's AIS prevention goals.
  - Update made to the guidelines: Added a program goal statement.
- A respondent asked if funds can be used to cover county administrative costs and to support county staff time in non-administrative roles.
  - Update made to the guidelines: Clarified that none of the state-provided AIS funding will be used to pay for county staff time or overhead costs to administer the AIS program or other county programs.
- A respondent highlighted a lack of clarity as to the placement of a category of AIS prevention work into funding priority Tier 2 when the results of a survey question might have indicated it could have been placed into funding priority Tier 1.
  - Update made to the guidelines: Provided additional explanation of the process to organize the categories of AIS prevention work into two tiers. The determination to place the categories of AIS prevention work into two tiers was based on the totality of the stakeholder engagement feedback, which balanced varied results to questions stakeholders responded to throughout the engagement process.

Additional comments asking for additional clarity on how the guidelines will be applied will be addressed with the release of the request for proposals for the grant funding to partners. Other comments were outside of the scope of the development of the guidelines. These comments have been heard and shared with county leadership.

### Contact

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### Website

[beheardhennepin.org/aquatic-invasives-species-guidelines](http://beheardhennepin.org/aquatic-invasives-species-guidelines)