

Environment

The U-S Supreme Court has refused to consider the Minnesota Auto Dealers Association's lawsuit to block Minnesota's new "clean car" standards mirroring California laws to push more sales of electric vehicles -- but that might not be the end of the debate:

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[bwcleancars52.mp3] :37 "SOC"

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(WRAP CONTENT: Auto Dealers Association President Scott Lambert says earlier the Minnesota Court of Appeals affirmed the state, if it wants to follow California on any future changes, will have to go through formal rulemaking. And Lambert says although Minnesota will impose clean-car rules for the 2025 model year, "there is no move" by state officials to extend it beyond that:

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"We're in kind of a ridiculous situation, where we're gonna be a California (standards) state for one year and then default back to federal emission standards."

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Environmentalists say transitioning to zero-emission vehicles will have significant climate and economic benefits. BW reporting.)

Significant fall rains continue to improve the drought conditions across Minnesota. Pete Boulay (BOO'-lay) with the State Climatology Office says the mid-October rainfall helped replenish soil moisture:

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[bpmndroughtdent1.mp3] :12 "of here"

("We're getting green which is a good thing. And we really put a serious dent in the drought. We stopped the slide and had a lot of improvement, too. But we need a few more events like this to really kick it out of here.")

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Boulay notes there are still some drought concerns in southeastern Minnesota. He says they're watching the long-term effect on the lakes and trees.

>>State Forest Nursery Selling Seedlings

(Minneapolis, MN) -- The State Forest Nursery is selling seedlings to landowners for the spring planting season. The Nursery began accepting orders on Wednesday. They offer 26 different species of native trees and shrubs. Those interested must buy at least 500 seedlings, which would be enough to plan about one acre of bare land. The Nursery is also offering two pre-made seedling packets. One packet includes coniferous trees like white spruce and red pine, which would add greenery to woodlands. The other includes fruiting trees and shrubs to help create pollinator-friendly habitats.

As skim ice begins forming on Minnesota waterways, the DNR's Lisa Dugan is encouraging you to have an early-season conversation with your kids about the dangers of early ice:

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[trcoldwater2.mp3] :13 "TO FORM ON IT"

(We know that kids are curious about ice especially when there is a new snowfall. So it's a great time right now to talk to your kids about staying away from water that has ice just starting to form on it.)

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Dugan says it's also important to stress no ice is ever 100 percent safe and that conditions can vary daily.

Healthcare access and affordability remain priorities for the Minnesota Farmers Union. President Gary Wertish says costs are unsustainable.

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[G:\scripts\Audio\trhealthcare1.mp3] :13 "THAT STUFF"

(Really hits rural America the hardest because as you get farther away from the urban centers there's a larger community that's harder to have a good hospital system and it's harder to have an emergency ambulance service. And the more rural you are, the more you're at risk for that stuff."

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Wertish says farmers now being able to buy into the MinnesotaCare health insurance program is a step in the right direction:

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[G:\scripts\Audio\trhealthcare2.mp3] :13 "THAT STUFF"

(Along with that too, we need to ask for increasing the Medicare rates, which also hits the rural hospitals hard. So as you see some of the hospitals struggling financially, a lot of that is because their Medicare reimbursement rates aren't high enough either)

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Other top priorities include curbing monopoly power and protecting competition, investing in climate resilience, addressing the shortage of veterinarians, and passing a comprehensive farm bill.

As temperatures get colder, area lakes, ponds, and rivers are starting to freeze. MNN's Tasha Redel has more:

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[trdnrice.mp3] :37 "YOU'LL BE BACK"

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The Minnesota DNR says it is one of the most dangerous times of the year when it comes to recreating on the water. There have been numerous reports of anglers out on the ice, but the DNR says conditions this time of year are highly variable, and falling through the ice can be deadly in just minutes. Authorities say a few fish in the freezer isn't worth risking your life. There should be at least four inches of clear ice before walking on it. Anglers should check the ice thickness with a spud bar, auger, or other device, wear a life jacket, and have a set of ice picks with them. Also, don't go out alone and let someone know where you're going and when you'll be back.

>>MN & WI DNR Capture 323 Invasive Carp in Mississippi River

(St. Paul, MN) -- The Minnesota D-N-R says the 323 invasive carp captured in the Mississippi River is the largest-ever single capture in Minnesota/Wisconsin waters. Officials say 296 silver carp, 23 grass carp and four bighead carp were captured Thursday near Trempealeau, Wisconsin. Officials say the capture was made possible by tracking tagged invasive carp, which led agency staff and contracted commercial fishers to them for removal. D-N-R Invasive Carp coordinator Grace Lopponow says it is likely these fish moved upstream from other locations during spring flooding and were not the result of reproduction in Minnesota waters.

>>DNR Warns of Unsafe Ice Conditions on Minnesota Waters

(Undated) -- As temperatures get colder, area lakes, ponds, and rivers are starting to freeze. The Minnesota D-N-R says it is one of the most dangerous times of the year when it comes to recreating on the water. There have been numerous reports of anglers out on the ice, but the D-N-R says conditions are highly variable, and falling through the ice can be deadly in just minutes. Authorities say there should be at least four inches of clear ice before walking on it. Anglers should check the ice thickness with a spud bar, auger, or other device, wear a life jacket, and have a set of ice picks with them. Also, don't go out alone and let someone know where you're going and when you'll be back.

The state Agriculture Department has announced restrictions on farmers' use of the dicamba (die-CAM-buh) herbicide for the 2024 growing season: No application south of Interstate 94 after June 12th, or north of I-94 after June 30th -- and no application if the temperature is over 85 degrees. The Ag Department's Joshua Stamper says:

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[bwdicamba10.mp3] :10 "WITH DRIFT"

"What we have seen, and what our data indicates, is that early-season applications tend to have the least amount of problems with drift."

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The state Ag Department says when they implemented date and temperature restrictions in 2022, complaints from neighboring properties dropped to about a tenth of what they were in the previous year.

>>2 Fisherman on ATV Safe After Breaking Through Ice on Upper Red Lake

4 (Undated) -- Two fishermen are safe after they fell through the ice on an A-T-V Thursday morning on Upper Red Lake in northern Minnesota. Emergency responders received a call from the two, who were able to get out of the water but couldn't get back to the resort. But within half-an-hour, they were back at the resort where first responders found them wet and cold, but uninjured. Recent rain and prolonged temperatures above freezing have caused ice conditions to deteriorate and many fish houses in the region have fallen through. Earlier this month, more than 30 people were rescued from a piece of ice that broke loose on Upper Red Lake.

7 >>MN DNR issues Ice Warning Due to Warm Weather

7 (Undated) -- The Minnesota DNR is asking residents statewide to hold off on activity on the ice due to deterioration throughout the unusually warm December. Officials say many, if not all, of the state's lakes do not have thick enough ice to support fish houses or wheelhouses and recreational vehicles. The warning comes after D-N-R conservation officers and sheriff's deputies across the state have responded to numerous reports in recent days of vehicles and structures breaking through the thin ice.