

April 4, 2022

Senator Thomas Bakk
Chair, Senate Capital Investment Committee
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Capitol, Room 328
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for Governor's Bonding Proposal: Community Tree Planting Grants, Organic Infrastructure; SF 4225 (Housley) and SF 3253 (Limmer)

Dear Chair Bakk,

The Partnership on Waste and Energy (Partnership) is a Joint Powers Board consisting of Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington counties, formed to address waste management and energy issues. The Partnership seeks to end waste, promote renewable energy and enhance the health and resiliency of communities we serve.

The Partnership strongly supports two provisions in the Governor's request and urges their inclusion in the committee's capital investment bill:

- **\$5 million for Community Tree Planting Grants** to minimize damage to forests and replace trees damaged by shade tree pests or disease.
- **\$10 million for organics infrastructure projects** through the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Capital Assistance Program.

Meeting the emerald ash borer (EAB) challenge is one of the Partnership's priorities for the 2022 session. Thirty-one counties—and counting—are now subject to ash quarantines. Thousands of trees are lost annually to EAB. Extreme weather such as drought only exacerbates threats EAB and other pests pose to the state's trees. Local communities face limited financial resources and need the state to step up to help recover from the compounding impacts on our community forests.

Organic waste comprises 30% of our trash. Keeping edible food out of the trash through food rescue programs and organics recycling through composting and anaerobic digestion are the biggest opportunities communities have to avoid landfilling. Organics recycling programs are in the early stages of development. Meeting challenging state recycling mandates will not happen without significant expansion of organics collection and processing infrastructure.

The Partnership would also like to call attention to two separately introduced bonding bills that are of great interest to member counties. We encourage these bonding requests also be considered for inclusion in the committee's omnibus capital investment bill.

- **SF 4225 (Housley), \$7.5 million for a household hazardous waste facility in Washington County** to keep toxic and hazardous products out of trash collection trucks and disposal facilities.
- **SF 3253 (Limmer), \$21 million for an anaerobic digestion facility in Brooklyn Park** to keep food scraps and other organic material out of landfills.

RE: Support for Governor's Bonding Proposal: Community Tree Planting Grants, Organic Infrastructure;
SF 4225 (Housley) and SF 3253 (Limmer)

We look forward to continued engagement with you on efforts to create a legacy of environmental protection in our communities. Thank you for your consideration of the above bonding requests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fran Miron", is positioned above the typed name.

Commissioner Fran Miron, Washington County
Chair, Partnership on Waste and Energy

cc: Senate Capital Investment Committee members