



March 29, 2022

**Re: County Input on SF4062, A6 Delete Everything Amendment**

Dear Chair Ingebrigtsen and Members of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee:

**On behalf of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), a voluntary association representing all 87 counties, we want to thank you for your work this session. We appreciate the time you have invested in hearing legislation and allowing us to offer support and critiques.**

AMC was joined by other county and solid waste entities in advocating for a functional change to the appropriation the Solid Waste Management Tax (SWMT) to SCORE Grants. These grants are an essential tool for counties to meet state obligations for recycling, waste reduction and landfill diversion. While the proposal to redirect the SWMT to SCORE is now in the Senate Tax Committee, **we appreciate this committee's continued support of SCORE funding with an increase of \$700,000** (Art1, Sec2, Subd 2, b). SCORE funding is a foundational tool used to implement better waste outcomes.

The inclusion of **funding for preparation of materials and application for assumption of Clean Water Act Section 404 permitting is an important next step to improving Minnesota environmental permitting** (Art.1, Sec.2, Subd 3). The state has delegated authority across numerous programs currently to permit under federal regulations. The \$740,000 will continue the cooperative work of stakeholders and state and federal agencies to finally eliminate duplicative and redundant permitting requirements.

There are numerous policy provisions included in SF4062, as amended by the A6-DE amendment, that impact county government operations, responsibilities, and finances. AMC has been involved in discussions to support or improve many of these items in the bill.

- **Public Waters Inventory (PWI)** (Art. 2, Sec. 31): AMC supports this provision to ensure the local government review of water reclassifications established Minnesota Statute 103G.201 (c) is applicable to all changes of a water's classification. The statute also provides for a notification to local governments, which have water planning and management responsibilities, of public waters reclassifications and gives them the authority to object. The DNR has proposed reclassifying waters under their authority to revise the PWI maps. If a map revision results in the reclassification of a watercourse, it should be subject to the same local government review as other reclassifications under MS 103G.201.
- **Use of Proceeds from Sales of Tax-Forfeited Lands** (Art.2, Sec.65): Counties are charged with the management of tax-forfeited properties and incur the costs required to clean-up and maintain these properties until they are returned to their best use. Addressing these costs is one of AMC's priorities this session. Giving counties the option to use receipts from sales or rentals of forfeited lands for these remediation efforts will help mitigate some of the financial impact and is beneficial to the whole community.

- **Mattress Stewardship Program** (Art.2, Sec. 53): AMC supports product stewardship as a valuable waste management option. We have been pursuing a compromise with the International Sleep Products Association (ISPA) on this mattress stewardship proposal and have made promising progress over the interim. Unfortunately, we saw this new proposal on Monday and have had little time to review it and no opportunity to discuss it with the ISPA representatives. We will be looking forward to continued discussions in the coming weeks. We want to ensure that consumers are provided with the end-of-life management of mattresses that the imposed fee promises and that local governments and taxpayers are not left to cover the costs if proper enforcement is not included.
- **Advanced Recycling** (Art.2, Sec.49-52, 54): Counties are interested in the development of additional opportunities to divert waste from landfills and move them up the waste hierarchy. We have been working with the bill advocates to make sure that the clarifications these businesses are seeking do not adversely impact counties but, rather, supplement our waste management efforts. We need to assess how this new language will be assessed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), which may require additional adjustments.
- **Lands Provisions** (Art.3): AMC supports the inclusion of the state lands provisions in Article 3. We also support including changes to the lease terms, raising the annual lease value triggers, and authorizing of conservation easements on tax-forfeited land.

**Again, thank you for your consideration of our perspective.** Should you have any questions about the information provided above, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



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