



March 28, 2022

Senator Bill Ingebrigtsen, Chair
Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee
3207 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: SF4062, A6 Delete Everything Amendment

Mr. Chair and Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee:

The Minnesota Solid Waste Administrators Association (SWAA), an affiliate of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), is a membership organization of county and solid waste district members that have the statutory responsibility for solid waste management. 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 Minnesota Inter-County Association (MICA) represents fifteen suburban and Greater Mn counties. We promote environmentally sound, cost-effective waste management systems. We support producer-led product stewardship efforts to reduce lifecycle impacts of products and manage materials sustainably.

SWAA, the Partnership, and MICA appreciate the opportunity to share our thoughts on the waste related provisions in the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Omnibus bill, SF4062 as amended by the A-6 DE amendment. We would be happy to offer additional thoughts upon request and work with the conference committee on these matters.

SCORE Grants (Art 1, Sec 2, Subd. 2, b): We appreciate and support the investment made in recycling and waste reduction efforts through the increase (\$700,000) to SCORE Grants. This additional funding would help further state recycling goals and support additional waste reduction efforts at the local level and move waste materials to the higher end of the waste hierarchy.

Our organizations have been advocating for legislation that will redirect over time the 30 percent skim of the Solid Waste Management Tax currently going to the General Fund to SCORE Grants instead. We greatly appreciate the committee's support of that bill and hope that you will help advocate for its inclusion in the Senate Tax bill. This committee has been continuously supportive of local government efforts to improve environmental outcomes in our waste management roles, and it is very much appreciated.

Mattress Stewardship Program (Art 2, Sec. 53): The Partnership and SWAA thank Senator Howe for bringing forward a promising proposal to address a problematic product in the waste stream, mattresses. Numerous Minnesota counties have recognized the value in recycling mattresses and have independently created programs or partnered with the private sector to invest in infrastructure to establish programs. This bill represents an important step in creating a producer-led product stewardship system to recycle mattresses with its many benefits:

- Provides feedstock to manufacture new products out of mattress components that would otherwise be landfilled.
- Reduces operational challenges in waste processing facilities.
- Supports jobs and economic growth.

Our associations have been working closely over the last year with the International Sleep Products Association (ISPA), who brought this proposal to Minnesota, to modify the language and ensure it works for Minnesota. We are impressed and thankful to the ISPA for their time and resources put to working on this bill. We are hopeful that mutually agreeable language can be finalized in the coming weeks.

This proposal addresses our position that all mattresses, whether recyclable or no longer recyclable, will be collected at no cost and local government costs associated with managing these items be covered by manufacturers. This ensures that residents will always have an easy and convenient way to dispose of their mattresses – reducing the likelihood of illegal dumping. This proposal is a positive development for consumers, local government, and the waste system. **There is a need to refine the language to assure the cost coverage features are being addressed as intended.**

We advocate for establishing a multi-stakeholder Advisory Council, or expanding the stakeholder consultation requirements, to ensure robust stakeholder involvement (Sub. 8). An advisory council has been included in other states where the ISPA has established programs. Minnesota recyclers, local governments, environmental groups, and other stakeholders have program experience and local market knowledge that will provide meaningful, ongoing input into a product stewardship program.

We also believe it is important to ensure comprehensive state oversight and enforcement to hold manufacturers accountable. The bill needs more clear direction on agency oversight and enforcement authority to compel compliance and appropriate use of funds, as the mattress recycling council will be collecting and managing revenue from Minnesota consumers under a state statutory program. We want to make sure this program works.

Chemical Plastic Recycling (Art 2, Sec 49-52, 54): Counties are interested in the development of additional opportunities to divert waste from landfills and move waste materials 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 understand how this new language will be interpreted by the MPCA, and as such it may require additional adjustments.

Unadopted Rules (Art 2, Sec 2 & Sec 58): We oppose this proposal, which is overly broad and could create barriers to efficient and effective implementation of state environmental laws. It has adverse impacts on solid waste planning, public information services, and county budgets; and will likely create unintended consequences for public health and environmental protection.

SWAA and the Partnership sincerely appreciate your time and consideration of our perspective on the above-mentioned items contained in the current legislative proposal. Should you have any questions about

the information provided above, please do not hesitate to reach out to our AMC policy analyst Brian Martinson, bmartinson@mncounties.org, 651-246-4156, or Rob Vanasek of Capitol Hill Associates, rob@capitolhillassoc.com, 612-964-4876.

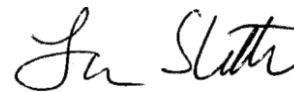
Sincerely,



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



Matt Massman, Executive Director
Minnesota Inter-County Association



Laine Sletta, Brown County
President, Solid Waste
Administrators Association