

March 20, 2023

Minnesota State Senate  
Committee on Energy, Utilities, Environment and Climate  
Minnesota Senate Building, Rm 1150  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: Senate File 2887 - Appropriations for Emerald Ash Borer Wood Dehydrator

Dear Chair Frentz, Senator Hoffman, and Committee Members,

On behalf of Clean Energy Economy MN (CEEM), I write today in support of SF2887, a bill appropriating money for a wood dehydrator that assists the process of disposing wood infested by emerald ash borer (EAB) to be used at Koda Energy located in Shakopee. This bill helps to promote a clean energy economy in Minnesota bringing new avenues for energy generation and helping to alleviate the waste created by the EAB infestation across our state.

CEEM is an industry-led, nonpartisan, non-profit organization representing the business voice of energy efficiency and clean energy in Minnesota. We work to educate Minnesotans about the economic benefits of transitioning to a clean energy economy and are committed to delivering a 100% clean energy future where all Minnesota businesses and citizens will thrive. Our business membership consists of nearly 50 clean energy companies ranging from start-up businesses to Fortune 100 and 500 corporations that employ tens of thousands of Minnesotans across the state.

The EAB has infested Minnesota trees since 2009, and has since spread to 39 counties<sup>1</sup>. The metropolitan area, Fargo, Duluth, and southern MN are under quarantine to prevent the human caused spread of the EAB. There are approximately 1 billion ash trees in Minnesota and many trees are already infected by the EAB. After a tree is infected, solutions are to treat the tree, remove the tree, or leave the tree which can all vary based on economic and environmental circumstances<sup>2</sup>. Minnesota's Environmental Quality Board Report on the EAB in 2019 estimated that 1.67 million tons of ash wood material would require disposal within the seven county metro area.

As detailed in the Minnesota Climate Action Framework, it is a priority for the state to invest in new markets, like wood – which is a low carbon substitute for more fossil fuel-intensive materials and to extract energy from waste wood to reduce the need for energy from other sources. When infected ash trees are removed, the wood waste can be used as biomass at facilities like Koda Energy which turn the waste into carbon neutral energy. A wood dehydrator at Koda Energy would allow the facility to maintain and increase capacity of their current production. Koda Energy, which opened in 2009, is a 23.4 MW biomass heat and power plant and consumes more than 500 tons of biomass fuel per day. The biomass energy generated at the Koda Energy facility is used to fully power Rahr Malting with excess energy sold to Xcel Energy dispatchable as it is needed.

We thank Sen. Hoffman for carrying this bill and Chair Frentz for hearing it in committee. We look forward to the passage of SF2887. If you have any questions, please let us know.

Sincerely,



George Damian  
Director of Government Affairs  
gdamian@cleanenergyeconomymn.org

<sup>1</sup> Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Emerald Ash Borer Program: <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/eab>

<sup>2</sup> Minnesota's Emerald Ash Borer Problem, CEEM: <https://www.cleanenergyeconomymn.org/blog/emerald-ash-borer>