



# Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate

March 6, 2023

Chair Hawj and Members of the Senate Environment, Climate and Legacy Committee

RE: Support for the Frontline Communities Protection Act, SF466

Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate (HPHC), a multidisciplinary network of over 500 Minnesota health professionals working to protect and improve human health by promoting climate health, supports SF466, the Frontline Communities Protection Act. This bill takes an important step in dismantling existing environmental racism, which has resulted in the disproportionate siting of highways and polluting industries in neighborhoods and communities with higher proportions of low-income and Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC).

Minnesota communities with concentrated poverty and higher proportions of BIPOC are burdened by higher levels of pollution from traffic and industrial sources. Compared with statewide averages, these same communities experience gaps in unemployment, income, wealth, arrest and incarceration rates, homeownership, educational achievement, housing quality, and healthy food access. Underlying socioeconomic disparities and higher pollution exposure create health disparities, including shorter lifespan, higher rates of infant and maternal mortality, and higher incidence of heart disease, cancer, asthma and diabetes. Black and American Indian infants are twice as likely to die before their first birthday as White infants.

Affected communities include urban, suburban, rural and tribal areas. Here are a few examples of Minnesota communities which could be positively impacted by this bill:

- Minneapolis Phillips neighborhood, with 60% people of color, experiences high levels of air pollution from traffic, and is home to 209 EPA hazardous chemical reporting facilities, a Superfund site that resulted from a shuttered pesticide plant that had polluted the soil and groundwater with toxic levels of arsenic, as well as Bituminous Roadways Asphalt Plant and the Smith Foundry, which produces smoke, metal dust, and fly ash.
- North Minneapolis, with 54% people of color, experiences high levels of air pollution from traffic and is home to 279 EPA hazardous chemical reporting facilities, a shuttered metals recycling facility, GAF roofing, and the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (HERC), a municipal waste incinerator that emits nitrogen oxides, lead, mercury, particulate matter, and dioxins.
- Prairie Island Indian Community, home to the Mdewakanton Band of Eastern Dakota, experiences chronic flooding of reservation lands due to a lock and dam system installed in 1936 on the Mississippi River. In addition, Xcel Energy was permitted to store 39 casks of highly radioactive waste from the Prairie Island nuclear plant on reservation lands, with some homes located 600 yards from the nuclear waste storage.

SF466 would protect these and other communities from being burdened by additional pollution sources. It is time to rectify past harms to communities which have been on the frontline of

transportation and industrial systems that place their health and economic well-being at risk. This bill will improve the health and quality of life in majority BIPOC and low-income communities and help build thriving and resilient communities which are better able to adapt to changing climate conditions. Thank you for hearing this important bill.

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