



March 12, 2023

Honorable Senators and House Representatives,

The DFL Environmental Caucus asks for your support of Senate File 1324 and House File 2791. This bill would provide common sense measures for managing motorized recreation in public state forests, will help protect and preserve Minnesota's Nature tourism economy and, every Minnesotan's natural heritage.

Given millions of dollars continue to be allocated to motorized recreation and, three statewide strategic Master Plans for motorized trail systems are underway, we need reasonable controls in place prior to construction to protect and preserve public lands for all stakeholders.

SF 1324 requires signage for off-highway vehicle (OHV) trail access that will reduce illegal, user-created trails that fragment habitat and spread invasive species deeper into forests. Signage will also address the issue of damage done in closed forests when signs have been removed. These measures will support DNR conservation officers in carrying out their responsibility to ensure our public lands are healthy and accessible for multiple uses and users. SF 1324 will also require local approval to ensure trails are designated only in host communities that want them.

Importantly, this bill will not diminish the experience of the responsible user, but is critical to preserve the resiliency of ecosystems and protect biodiversity, allowing them the best chance to thrive as the climate warms.

Thank you for your support of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine D. Zimmer". The signature is written in a cursive style and is contained within a thin black rectangular border.

Catherine Zimmer, board member
DFL Environmental Caucus