



March 30, 2023

**Re: SF 2438 DE1 Amendment – Environment and Natural Resources Omnibus**

Chair Hawj and members of the Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee:

The League of Minnesota Cities, on behalf of its 837 member cities, appreciates the opportunity to comment on the delete-all amendment to HF 2310. There are numerous sections of the bill that directly affect cities and their efforts to protect the health, safety, and welfare of their residents and respectfully requests that the chair and committee consider the impacts these changes might have on cities.

**Pollution Control Agency Provisions**

- **Municipal liaison at MPCA:** This position has existed for several biennia and has provided significant assistance to small city wastewater systems, as well as coordinated discussions of wastewater policy and programs between the agency, operators, and cities. The League supports continuing this position. Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd. 2(a) and 4(a).
- **Local climate infrastructure grants:** This program would provide over \$87.2 million each year of the biennium to assist local governments in identifying water infrastructure improvements needed due to climate change, particularly in stormwater infrastructure. These resources are badly needed and the proposal is supported by the League. Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd. 2(k).
- **PFAS Treatment in Public Water Supplies:** The League supports \$25 million being allocated to assist communities with PFAS contamination in the costs of dealing with treatment of their drinking water and appreciates the availability of those resources being extended until the end of the FY 26-27 biennium. Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 6(e).
- **Greater MN Recycling and Composting Grants:** The League supports continued funding for this grants program to establish and improve recycling and composting availability for non-metro communities and tribal governments. Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 7(b).
- **SCORE Funding:** SCORE block grants are key for local government management of solid waste. While the grants are awarded to counties, many cities receive pass-through funding to implement portions of the county solid waste plan within their communities. That support is essential to local government efforts and is supported by the League. Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd. 7(d).
- **GreenStep Cities:** The League supports the GreenStep Cities program and appreciated the role that the MPCA has played in coordinating that program. This appropriation of \$190,000 per year allows that effort to continue. While we believe this should be a base item in the agency's budget as an area where ongoing effort is needed, the League supports this one-time funding. Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd. 7(l).
- **PFAS Source Assessment and Reduction Grants:** The League supports the \$4 million one-time appropriation proposed for the identification and reduction of PFAS sources. Art. 1, Sec. 2, subd. 7 (p).
- **Remediation Fund and MLCAT:** The state bears a permanent obligation to manage closed landfills, so the ongoing transfer of funds into the remediation fund and the repayment of funds

back into the Metropolitan Landfill Contingency Action Trust (MLCAT) are both essential in making sure the state can meet those obligations. Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 10 (a) and (b).

**Department of Natural Resources**

- **ReLeaf Program Funding:** Emerald ash borer and other urban forest management needs have exposed the state's need to provide ongoing support for local management of urban forests. The League supports the state again investing in the ReLeaf program to assist in that effort. Art. 1, Sec. 3, subd. 4(j).

**Board of Water and Soil Resources**

- **Lawns to Legumes:** The League supports the funding and policy supporting the Lawns to Legumes program to assist interested property owners in transitioning to pollinator-friendly landscaping. Art. 1, Sec 4(i).

Obviously, a great number of other programs and efforts in state agencies and departments also affect city abilities to provide safe, reliable, and affordable water and wastewater services, as well as to protect public, health, safety, welfare, and the environment. The League has been generally supportive of the proposed Governor's budget in areas where we have not expressed concerns, seeing those proposals as supporting the work cities need to do.

Thank you for taking time to consider these comments and good luck on your continued work. The League stands ready to assist and provide information as discussion of the omnibus policy and fiscal bills progress this session. Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



Craig A. Johnson  
Intergovernmental Relations Representative  
League of Minnesota Cities