

Senator Sandra Pappas, Chair
Senate Capital Investment Committee
2113 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

April 29, 2024

Dear Chair Pappas and Members of the Senate Capital Investment Committee,

As the Committee considers the delete-all amendment to SF5251, we write to highlight items affecting some important natural climate solutions. Natural climate solutions like tree planting, cover cropping, improved forest management, avoided land conversion, and improved nutrient management have the power to contribute to 30 percent of the solution to climate change.

We sincerely thank the committee for your focus on trees in the proposed delete-all amendment. An analysis conducted by The Nature Conservancy shows that in Minnesota, reforestation is the top natural climate solution to sequester carbon and mitigate the impacts of climate change – not to mention the many benefits for drinking water, habitat, and flood mitigation among others.

The most critical reforestation practice that the science highlights is to restore northern and mixed woods. While it is essential to ensure tree canopy expands across Minnesota, from boulevards in urban communities and backyards, to forest-scale private lands and public lands, there is significant opportunity for impact at the forest-scale.

We are pleased at the inclusion of many line items related to tree-planting, including Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reforestation, betterment of buildings improvements to the DNR state forest nursery, in addition to community tree planting grants, because supporting forest cover at scale is essential for realizing needed benefits. **We also urge the committee to consider an increased investment in reforestation.** Based on information provided from the DNR, reforestation costs on state-owned lands are approximately \$4 million annually, an amount which does not account for the opportunity to expand tree planting for additional benefit. **We respectfully request the committee invest at least \$8 million in reforestation to support the benefits of a crucial Minnesota asset—the state’s forests.**

In addition, we request the committee further consider investments in **DNR Aquatic Management Areas and Scientific and Natural Areas**, which help protect areas of high biodiversity and maintain carbon sequestration on lands that may otherwise be at risk of conversion.

Thank you for your work to include key DNR forestry investments, and your continued efforts.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Pinkalla
Government Relations Director
The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota

Angelica Anderson
Government Relations Specialist
The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota