



CONSERVATION
MINNESOTA

March 27, 2024

Chair Frentz and Members of the Senate Energy Committee:

Conservation Minnesota urges your support for SF4889 (Mitchell), an innovative collaboration to help solve Minnesota's growing solid waste problem.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency estimates that food waste makes up 18% of landfills in Minnesota. Food waste in landfills breaks down and produces methane, a greenhouse gas with heat-trapping potential 25 times greater than carbon dioxide.

Hennepin County estimates that organics and food waste make up about 32% of the material in our trash. Without organics diversion programs or food waste prevention, the organics and food waste that we throw away are either buried in landfills or burned at incinerators like the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (or HERC).

SF4889 presents a significant opportunity to reduce landfilling and incineration of food waste and organics. Developing an anaerobic digester at Shakopee will increase our ability to manage our food waste and convert it to a reliable energy source. This facility will process an estimated 30,000 tons of residential food waste per year which would otherwise be lost to landfills or incinerators. The innovative public/private partnership is exactly the type of creative solution that Minnesota needs to see replicated so our state can truly move the needle towards a zero-waste system.

The Renewable Development Account has proven track record of funding "innovative energy projects" like this proposal. The repurposing of food waste and organic material could reduce demand on traditional fossil-gas sources and could lead to increased efficiencies in our statewide waste disposal system. It would also create a greater source of biochar, which can be useful for sequestering carbon as a soil amendment. This project provides immense value to our clean energy and environmental goals in Minnesota.

We ask for your support of SF4889 to bring this next-generation technology to scale in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

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