

March 4, 2024



Chair Hawj and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SF 3940 (Kupec). Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA) is a non-profit organization celebrating our 50th year of using law and science to protect the state's natural resources and the health of its people.

MCEA strongly supports SF 3940, which tackles electronic waste collection and processing in Minnesota. Minnesotans are sitting on a stockpile of valuable minerals that could be used to address the climate crisis, but it may not be one you think of. It's the pile of defunct and obsolete devices and cords in our junk drawers. One study found that the average American household has about 80 e-waste devices lying around. When it comes to meeting materials needs, there is no better source than the already-mined and already-processed minerals that are in electronic waste. Recycling is always cleaner, cheaper, and faster than new mining operations, meaning that if Minnesota wants to lead on the materials needed for the clean energy transition we should start here. MCEA's ["Mining the Climate Crisis"](#) series dug deep into this and is a good source of information about the potential that SF 3940 can unlock.

Currently, far too much of this valuable material is landfilled or incinerated. Using one metal as an example, the U.S. recycles just 33% of our copper, compared with a 60% recycling rate in Europe. In Minnesota, we captured just 23.7% of mixed electronics for recycling in 2020. A pilot study estimated that the value of capturing 100% of these devices in Minnesota would be \$2.8 billion per year.

Several features of SF 3940 are worth noting:

- A flexible definition of "electronics recyclable," compared to the current static list in statute, which gets more obsolete each year. With new products that eventually become e-waste entering the market each year, this change is important.
- Funding to pay for easy, convenient, free, statewide e-waste collection. If it is difficult and expensive for consumers to recycle e-waste, it will continue to accumulate in our "drawers of shame." The reimbursement for collectors in SF 3940 will create far more convenient options for consumers, leading to the collection of this valuable material.
- An electronics recycling advisory committee ensures that the program is updated using up-to-date experience from solid waste administrators, collectors, and others.
- An air quality improvement grant program helps electronics recyclers install equipment that protects the health of workers and the public.
- An electronics recycling study with a required report to the Legislature to identify and overcome barriers for increased electronics recycling.

Thank you to Sen. Kupec for authoring this important bill.

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