

## **Letter in support of the 100% Electronics Recycling Bill SF3940/ HF3566**

Dear Chairperson,

The Climate Action Team of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Duluth has voted its unanimous support of the work of RECA, after having the opportunity to learn about the practical, effective and much needed program they are proposing for our state.

There are several reasons that convinced us that this bill would be an excellent step toward care of our communities and our earth home. As RECA has articulated them,

1. The pending shortage of critical metals puts our clean energy transition in jeopardy. Our congregation has invested in a solar array toward this transition and we strongly support actions that move us all to cleaner air and water and a more stable climate. Critical metals can be recovered from our electronic waste. Minnesota's annual e-waste stream contains \$3 billion dollars worth of all the metals we need.
2. By recycling our e-waste, we can create 1700 direct jobs just in our state and effective collection is the first step towards getting there.
3. We need to collect our e-waste. In Minnesota we only collect around 20% of our e-waste - and much of the rest ends up in landfills where it contributes 70% of lead contamination. This pollution disproportionately affects our most marginalized communities, urban and rural, across the state.
4. Landfill fires need to be addressed - they are costly in dollars and in toxic air pollution. Minnesota landfill operators and material recovery facilities(MRFs) report battery fires every few days. Small fires cost an average \$2,600 dollars to MRFs. Large fires cost up to 50 million dollars. The frequency of these fires is increasing every year. In 2018 we lost a 20 million dollar transfer station due to a discarded battery. Last year Rice County Landfill had a battery fire that burned for almost a week straight. SF3940 will greatly reduce how many batteries end up in our waste stream, eliminating fires that cost taxpayers and businesses millions of dollars a year.

It is time to replace our program from 2007 that sends most of its funds out-of-State, relies on charging Minnesota residents per item recycled, and relies on Minnesota tax dollars to subsidize its shortcomings.

Our Team supports the recommended three steps to fix this collection system:

1. An expanded definition. The e-waste stream changes constantly - we don't want to have to meet back here every couple of years to add to our definitions! The current program covers TVs and computers - SF 3940 will cover the whole e-waste stream.
2. Make sure the cost of recycling is covered before the item is purchased. SF 3940 removes the financial barrier for recycling for all Minnesota residents.
3. Create incentives for increased collection rates. By directly reimbursing collection sites for the electronics recycled, SF 3940 provides an incentive to collect more material regardless of type - and provides sufficient funds for them to spend on education and marketing to raise awareness among residents.

Thank you for your attention to the e-waste problems and the solutions offered in this bill.

Sincerely,

Beth Tamminen, Chair

Climate Action Team

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Duluth

835 W. College St. Duluth MN