

HENNEPIN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

March 25, 2024

Senator Ann H. Rest
Chair, Senate Taxes Committee
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Hennepin County Support for directing the remaining 27% of Solid Waste Management Tax revenues to SCORE (SF 4982)

Dear Chair Rest:

On behalf of Hennepin County, I am writing to express our support for SF 4982 to direct the remaining 27% of Solid Waste Management Tax revenues to SCORE grants for counties. Thank you for co-authoring this bill. Passage of this legislation is critical to helping us meet our zero waste and climate goals.

Making progress toward zero waste will require significant state support, just as the first recycling programs needed SCORE funding 30 years ago. Counties and cities want to expand services beyond traditional recycling to include new organics recycling programs, more work on multifamily recycling, additional education and outreach, and more emphasis on waste prevention and reuse, but we need additional resources to do so.

State law mandates that counties manage municipal solid waste. Metro counties are responsible to meet a 75% recycling rate by 2030. However, **appropriations to fund waste prevention and recycling programs have not kept pace with increased state mandates**. State funding must rise to the level of investment needed to meet state recycling goals and match the scope of the challenges we face in making progress toward the state's recycling and climate goals. All revenue from the solid waste management tax imposed on waste services should be used for waste management activities such as SCORE funding.

In Hennepin County, we pass 100% of our SCORE funds through to our cities for their residential recycling and organics collection programs. Additional funding that will result from the passage of this bill will increase our cities' abilities to improve the county's recycling rate, which is currently at 42%.

Our residential curbside recycling and organics programs cost \$30.3 million in 2022, and these costs are only increasing. Additional SCORE funds would go a long way to cover the expense of new organics collection programs and reduce the burden on households. Curbside

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organics collection is now available in most Hennepin County cities. Because of state law, haulers are required to charge all residents for the service, whether they participate or not, to spread the costs of recycling programs. These households should also get the benefit of having SCORE funds to help with those costs. With the State's recently released Metro Policy Solid Waste Management Plan, all metro counties will need to offer curbside organics recycling by 2030 and its associated cost increases.

Passing this legislation couldn't be more timely. With our efforts to transition to a zero-waste future, we are committed to addressing the state's waste and climate issues and strongly encourage you to increase the SCORE allocation to help fund programs that reduce our need to dispose of waste in landfills.

Thank you for your time and effort on this important bill.

Sincerely,



Irene Fernando
Chair, Hennepin County Board

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