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March 5, 2025

Senator Founj Hawj, Chair
Senator Jennifer A. McEwen, Vice Chair
Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 1150
95 University Ave W
St. Paul, MN 55103

RE: SF 1690, Establishing a Stewardship Program for Circuit Boards, Batteries, and Electrical Products

Dear Chair Hawj, Vice Chair McEwen, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SF 1690.

SF 1690 would establish a comprehensive stewardship program for many batteries and consumer electronic and electrical products, which would capture far more material than is collected under current statute, including: batteries of any type, size, or energy capacity, battery containing products and embedded batteries, any product with a circuit board, and other consumer electrical devices powered by cords, with exceptions for large appliances and lead-acid batteries.

The program would ensure recovery of these products for reuse and refurbishment, as well as for the recycling of valuable metals in these products, like steel, manganese, and zinc, for use as feedstock in products. The program would provide a continuous flow of high-quality material to refurbishment companies, recyclers, and manufacturers that will allow for long-term investments in local businesses and infrastructure, and support jobs. By recovering these products for reuse, refurbishment, and recycling, the program will reduce the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions required to mine virgin materials, and prevent toxic cadmium, lead, and mercury from contaminating our environment. Furthermore, the program will save local governments millions of dollars in waste management and recycling costs.

SF 1690 contains many best practices that ensure an effective stewardship program, including a stewardship organization, a comprehensive program plan, strong convenience standards to ensure equitable access for all communities in Minnesota, producer funding for all program costs,

including agency oversight with no consumer fees, a board to advise the oversight agency on reimbursement rates, and comprehensive education and outreach to ensure public awareness and participation. The bill also includes labeling requirements for batteries, which will enhance program effectiveness by reducing consumer confusion, and bans mercury from batteries to eliminate toxic materials from products and the recycling stream.

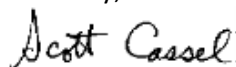
Minnesota's rechargeable battery stewardship law (1991) and its electronics stewardship law (2007) have been successful in recovering and recycling covered electronics and rechargeable batteries for decades. The electronics program recovers nearly 3 pounds of scrap electronics per person in Minnesota each year, and the programs combined save local government and taxpayers millions of dollars while recovering valuable material and preventing pollution.

However, since these laws were established, many new types of batteries have been developed, and the number of products powered by batteries and electrical components has grown exponentially. The current statute is no longer sufficient to ensure the continued recovery and recycling of batteries and electronics. For example, lithium-ion batteries, which are used in a growing number of products, including e-scooters and e-bikes, have sparked fires in trucks and at recycling facilities that have caused millions of dollars in damage and added business costs, as well as severe worker injuries and tragic deaths. Bringing more batteries and consumer electronic and electrical products into collection programs will ensure safe collection, reduce fires, and maximize value in the growing circular economy.

The Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) is a national policy expert and consulting nonprofit that pioneered product stewardship in the United States along with our members – hundreds of state and local government officials, including those in Minnesota– and our partners from companies, environmental groups, academia, and international governments. Since 2000, PSI's facilitated dialogues, research, pilot projects, and policy models have helped shape most of the 141 EPR laws enacted for 20 industry sectors.

I respectfully urge you to support **SF 1690** for the financial, environmental, and safety interests of Minnesota's economy and communities, and for ensuring the future success of the state's battery and electronics stewardship programs. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (617) 513-3954, or Scott@ProductStewardship.US.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Cassel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Scott" is written with a large, prominent "S", and the last name "Cassel" follows in a similar cursive script.

Scott Cassel
Chief Executive Officer/Founder