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April 8, 2025

Senator Bobby Joe Champion, Chair
Senate Jobs & Economic Development Committee
3401 Minnesota Senate Bldg.
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: SF 1832 - Funding for Host Community Economic Development Grant

Dear Senator Champion,

I am writing to express the City of Inver Grove Heights's opposition to the proposed cuts to the Host Community Economic Development Grant program contained within SF 1832. As home to Pine Bend Landfill, one of the largest mixed municipal solid waste landfills in Minnesota, the City of Inver Grove Heights is one of two communities in the metropolitan area eligible for this grant program.

Less than three months ago, on January 27, 2025, the Inver Grove Heights City Council authorized a sizable vertical expansion of Pine Bend Landfill and approved its continued operation through 2042. For 17 years, the City and Pine Bend Landfill had a legally binding agreement that the landfill would close no later than December 31, 2030, but now the City has also agreed to its continued operation for an additional 12 years. In doing so, Inver Grove Heights will continue accepting mixed municipal solid waste from across the metro region and beyond, assuming the significant environmental and community impacts associated with being a landfill host community.

The more than 200 acres of valuable industrial land occupied by Pine Bend Landfill could be home to numerous other industries or uses more beneficial to our community, but instead is the final destination for approximately 350,000 tons of household solid waste per year. No community wants to be home to a large landfill, and we can all look forward to the day when improved waste management techniques and technologies will make landfills obsolete, but for the foreseeable future they are a necessary part of a functioning region.

For more than 10 years, through the ups and downs of numerous state budget forecasts, the Host Community Economic Development Grant Program has been one modest way the State of Minnesota and its residents recognize and partially compensate the cities of Inver Grove Heights and Burnsville and their residents for being host to these essential facilities. For the state to so deeply cut the Host Community Economic Development Grant Program now, just as Inver Grove Heights has stepped up to the plate as a state and regional partner in solid waste management, is particularly troublesome.

Rather than reduce the available funding, Inver Grove Heights would recommend revisions to the existing program to improve access to and utilization of these state allocated funds for their intended purpose. There are numerous ways in which this grant program is administered differently than other economic development

funding tools, and these constraints have hampered the City's ability to successfully utilize available funding in the past. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss ideas for improving the program and its effectiveness moving forward.

On behalf of the City of Inver Grove Heights, I urge the Committee to remove this budget cut from SF 1832, thereby continuing the state's recognition of the essential role played by landfill host communities.

Sincerely,

Kristine Lyndon Wilson

Kris Wilson
City Administrator

cc: Senator Rich Draheim
Senator Matt Klein
Representative Rick Hansen
Representative Mary Frances Clardy