MINNESOTA RESOURCE RECOVERY ASSOCIATION | ZERO WASTED MAKING EVERY RESOURCE COUNT

March 25, 2026

Dear Chair Klein and members of the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee

The Minnesota Resource Recovery Association (MRRA) is pleased to offer our support for SF 1690 (Kupec), as amended, which focuses the bill on establishing a product stewardship program for batteries.

The MRRA is a private-public membership organization that supports the utilization of today's waste as a local, renewable, and sustainable resource for tomorrow's energy. Our membership represents 1/3 of Minnesota counties in their solid waste management and recycling needs.

We know from experience that batteries—particularly lithium-ion—are increasingly entering the mixed municipal solid waste (MSW) stream, creating significant safety risks, including fires at solid waste facilities. Our facilities regularly see lithium-ion batteries in the handling and processing of MSW and are witnessing multiple small fires every month.

Minnesota has spent hundreds of millions of dollars on infrastructure to properly process MSW and recyclable materials and these facilities are all at risk. There is significant concern that if the rate of incoming batteries is not reduced, there could be another major fire at a facility in Minnesota.

According to the recently published 9th Annual Waste & Recycling Facility Fires Report, the surge in lithium-ion battery incidents has now become a widespread reality across the waste and recycling stream. We have seen operators make meaningful progress through updated emergency plans, employee training, and new fire detection technologies; however, the scale of the problem **continues to grow**. The report estimates that in 2025, fires have caused more than $2.5 billion in damages throughout the United States and Canada.

The bill as amended focuses on batteries and provides a clear and targeted approach to addressing one of the fastest- growing safety challenges in the waste stream.

The bill, as amended, establishes a comprehensive stewardship structure including convenient statewide collection, strong safety standards, and a producer-funded system. MRRA supports continued stakeholder engagement on implementation details, including the management of recalled batteries, to ensure the program functions effectively.

MRRA supports SF 1690, to improve safety and environmental benefits for Minnesotans. Thank you for considering this legislation.

Sincerely,

Steve Vrchota, Chair
Minnesota Resource Recovery Association