March 25, 2026

Senator Matt Klein, Chair
Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 2105
95 University Avenue West, St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for Battery Extended Producer Responsibility Bill – S.F. 1690 (A6 Amendment)

Dear Chair Klein and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Olmsted County Environmental Resources, I am writing in strong support of S.F. 1690, the Battery Stewardship (Extended Producer Responsibility) legislation.

Batteries are one of the fastest growing and most problematic materials in the solid waste stream. As their use has expanded across consumer products, so have the challenges they present to local waste systems. Lithium-ion and other rechargeable batteries are a leading cause of fires at solid waste facilities, including material recovery facility (MRF) operations, transfer stations, and landfills. These incidents pose serious risks to employee safety, costly damage to infrastructure, and disrupt operations. In addition, batteries contain hazardous materials that require specialized handling and are not appropriate for disposal in traditional solid waste systems.

Despite ongoing education and household hazardous waste programs, local governments cannot keep pace with the volume and complexity of battery waste. The current system relies heavily on taxpayer-funded programs and voluntary participation, placing the financial and operational burden on counties and ratepayers rather than on the producers who design and distribute these products.

S.F. 1690 provides a practical and effective solution by establishing a producer-funded, statewide battery stewardship program. The bill requires producers to participate in an organized system that ensures convenient collection, safe management, and proper recycling of covered batteries across Minnesota. It also includes requirements for accessibility, education, performance standards, and full cost coverage by producers, creating a more equitable and sustainable framework.

From an operational standpoint, this legislation will reduce fire risks, improve facility safety, and protect critical infrastructure. From a policy perspective, it aligns with Minnesota's waste management hierarchy and advances responsible product stewardship.

Olmsted County Environmental Resources strongly supports S.F. 1690 and encourages its passage. This legislation is a necessary step to address a growing safety and environmental issue while ensuring that responsibility is appropriately shared across the product lifecycle.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cathleen Hall
Director, Environmental Resources
Olmsted County