

March 12, 2021

Representative Jamie Long
Chair, House Climate & Energy Finance & Policy Committee
517 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support for Natural Gas Innovation Act – H.F. 239

Dear Chair Long,

The Partnership on Waste and Energy (Partnership) is a Joint Powers Board formed by Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington counties to address solid waste management and energy issues. The Partnership strongly supports the proposed Natural Gas Innovation Act (H.F. 239) introduced by Representative Zack Stephenson and urges the Committee to approve this initiative.

The development of a stable and reliable market for renewable natural gas is an important step to develop the infrastructure to recycle organic waste. This is a key priority for the Partnership.

Current law requires metropolitan counties to achieve a 75% recycling goal by the year 2030. In order to achieve this ambitious goal, the recycling of organic waste, primarily food waste, will be necessary. Organic waste comprises 30% of our trash, and there are hundreds of thousands of tons available for recycling.

Organics recycling programs are in the early stages of development. The key limiting factor is available infrastructure to process the organics into beneficial products. Composting is the most common organics processing method, but anaerobic digestion provides a better and higher use for this material. Specifically, anaerobic digestion has the added benefit of producing biogas which can be used to produce various forms of clean, renewable energy – including renewable natural gas.

Locally, there is wide interest in development of anaerobic digestion facilities. The Partnership believes that state policy should support wide-spread community benefits which occur where waste and energy policies intersect.

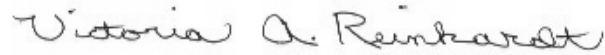
The objective of the Natural Gas Innovation Act is to provide a framework within which natural gas utilities can bring renewable natural gas into the marketplace.

The Partnership believes that this legislative proposal will increase demand for renewable natural gas and create a stronger and more stable marketplace for this product. The result will be improved access to financing and more reliable revenue streams for facilities that use anaerobic digestion to manage organic waste. The bill will also help tap an enormous, readily available

source of clean energy. In addition, it will reduce the state's reliance on fossil fuels and reduce greenhouse gases and climate change impacts through a renewable energy source.

This policy will support the conversion of organic waste into biofuels and provide the added benefit of reducing impacts of waste. For all of these reasons, the Partnership strongly supports H.F. 239.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Victoria A. Reinhardt".

Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County
Chair, Partnership on Waste and Energy

cc: Mike Molzahn, Committee Administrator
Commissioner Debbie Goettel, Hennepin County
Commissioner Fran Miron, Washington County