

April 28, 2021

Senator Paul Utke
3403 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for S.F. 1047

Dear Senator Utke:

The Partnership on Waste and Energy (Partnership) is a Joint Powers Board consisting of Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington counties, formed to address waste management and energy issues. Emerald ash borer (EAB) is now identified in 27 Minnesota counties and continues to spread. Communities are removing and replacing ash trees as quickly as funding will allow to slow the spread of EAB. The challenge of properly managing the surge of waste wood created as we battle EAB is one of the urgent concerns of the Partnership.

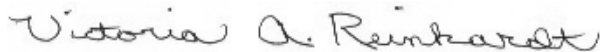
S.F. 1047 provides for an extension of the power purchase agreement between Xcel Energy and St. Paul District Energy. **We strongly support S.F. 1047 as necessary to help manage wood waste.**

While the Partnership supports the multi-faceted response outlined in the EQB [2019 Emerald Ash Borer in Minnesota Report](#), we recognize that the steps that need to be taken are rolling out slowly or are on hold for want of resources. We urge the state to ramp up funding and prepare a collaborative statewide EAB plan, but in the meantime, we have to do something with the growing volumes of wood waste.

We can't landfill the wood waste. We can't open burn the wood waste. Our only practical outlet at this time is to provide wood as a fuel for the St. Paul District Energy facility. It is essential that the power purchase agreement between Xcel and St. Paul District Energy be extended. This will allow additional time to use waste wood responsibly.

We understand that the extension of the power purchase agreement between Xcel Energy and St. Paul District Energy is short-term. Nonetheless, we support this extension as an important tool as we work together to find additional approaches for responsibly managing waste wood.

Sincerely,



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

cc: Pete Globa, Legislative Assistant
Commissioner Debbie Goettel, Hennepin County
Commissioner Fran Miron, Washington County