

MEMORANDUM

May 6, 2021

Senator Bill Ingebrigtsen
Senator Carrie Ruud
Senator Justin Eichorn
Senator David Tomassoni
Senator Torrey Westrom

Representative Rick Hansen
Representative Ami Wazlawik
Representative Kelly Morrison
Representative Peter Fischer
Representative Josh Heintzeman

Dear Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Conference Committee (SF959):

The Partnership on Waste and Energy (Partnership) is a Joint Powers Board of Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington counties. We seek to end waste, promote renewable energy and enhance the health and resiliency of communities we serve while advancing equity and responding to the challenges of a changing climate.

In a separate letter addressed to the committee, the Partnership included support for certain Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) provisions amidst comments on several other provisions in the Senate and House omnibus bills currently being deliberated in the committee. We would like to call specific attention to these EAB provisions and emphasize our strong support.

EAB is now established in at least 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.

State law prohibits landfilling wood waste. Wood waste cannot be sent to MSW waste-to-energy facilities. Open burning, even if it were allowed, creates fire dangers and poor air quality, adversely impacting human health.

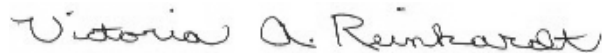
The Partnership urges the conferees to adopt the following provisions to increase efforts to slow the spread of EAB and slow the rate of increase of wood waste.

- \$3,500,000 in LCCMR appropriations to protect community forests through DNR surveys, assessments, trainings, assistance and grants to communities for EAB management. This is critically needed as we approach the peak years of the EAB threat. (*Senate Art. 3, Sec. 2, Subd. 6(b), Lines 178.7-178.18; House Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 6(b), Lines 60.30-61.5*)
- \$750,000 the first year and \$1,000,000 the second year, and continued availability of \$700,000 in prior appropriations, for DNR grants to local government to develop community ash management plans, tree replacement and canopy diversification. (*House Art. 1, Sec. 3, Subd. 4(j), Lines 23.10-23.32 and House Art. 1, Sec. 10, Subd. 4(h), Lines 41.11-41.17*)

- \$320,000 transferred to the DNR to provide surveys, assessments, trainings, assistance with grants to communities for EAB management and canopy diversification. (*House Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 20(3), Lines 85.31-86.3*)
- \$700,000 in LCCMR appropriations to the University of Minnesota for research on long-term EAB impacts and optimal forest diversification. (*Senate Art. 3, Sec. 2, Subd. 6(e), Lines 178.32-179.12; House Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 6(e), Lines 61.21-61.34*)
- \$840,000 in LCCMR appropriations to the University of Minnesota's Natural Resources Research Institute to develop and demonstrate technologies to enhance the long-term health and management of Minnesota's forest resources, including emerging market opportunities. (*House Art. 3, Sec. 2, Subd. 19(a), Lines 131.3-131.16*)

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Partnership's positions with respect to EAB funding. Please contact Sam Richie at Fryberger, Buchanan, Smith & Frederick, P.A. for further information on the Partnership's positions on these issues (srichie@fryberger.com, 218-301-9758).

Sincerely,



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

cc: Commissioner Debbie Goettel, Hennepin County
Commissioner Fran Miron, Washington County
Megan Hennen, Committee Administrator, Senate
Peter Strohmeier, Committee Administrator, House