

Partnership on Waste and Energy

State Support Needed to Fight Emerald Ash Borer and Manage Wood Waste

The Partnership on Waste and Energy (PWE) seeks 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.

Local governments statewide face unfunded mandates to respond to the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and the growing volume of wood waste. State financial and policy support must scale up to meet this challenge. Additional state help is needed to maintain the St. Paul Cogeneration facility as a biomass energy solution for wood waste. State action is necessary now to slow the spread of EAB and develop additional options for the best uses of diseased trees.

Wood waste from EAB is growing beyond current management capacity

We are entering the peak phase of ash tree loss in the seven-county metro area this decade, requiring the management and disposal of more than 1.67 million tons of wood waste. EAB has infested trees in 30 Minnesota counties, and more will follow. The Legislature acted in 2021 to approve a two-year extension, through 2024, for producing biomass energy from wood waste at the St. Paul Cogeneration facility. That was an important first step.

- Nearly 3 million community ash trees in the state—one in five—are threatened by EAB.
- Landfilling, stockpiling and open burning are not viable options. We cannot repeat the mistakes of the past response to Dutch elm disease.
- New markets must be developed for products derived from harvestable ash trees to prevent wood waste and avoid saturating current wood-use markets.
- Additional solutions must be developed to handle volumes of wood waste that exceed capacity of the St. Paul Cogeneration facility.



Local governments need state partnership to succeed

The cost of the EAB response will continue to grow in the coming years. Sustainable funding is needed to slow the spread and ensure the highest and best use of diseased trees, consistent with the waste management hierarchy.

- Communities need statewide solutions now, before wood waste outstrips available management capacity.
- State resources are critical as local governments are not prepared for or able to bear the full cost of tree removal, replacement, and wood waste management, estimated to be approximately \$1,000 per tree and growing.
- The state must lead a coordinated approach now to develop a strategic, sound, and lasting wood waste management infrastructure like there is for other kinds of waste.

Contact for More Information

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