

April 5, 2022

Representative Rick Hansen  
Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee  
407 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**Re: Support for H.F. 4492, House Environment and Natural Resources Omnibus Bill**

Dear Chair Hansen,

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. The Partnership 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.

We appreciate the opportunity to express support for several provisions of H.F. 4492 that will have significant impact on protecting public health and the environment and help counties and communities be more successful in reaching challenging statutory goals on waste management.

**Repay Metropolitan Landfill Contingency Action Trust (MLCAT)**

The Partnership strongly supports transferring \$29.055 million from the general fund to repay what was borrowed twice from the MLCAT account since 2003 to balance the general fund budget, plus interest and lost earnings. The MLCAT is an important mechanism to protect public health and the environment and address critical needs resulting from landfill pollution. This provision helps provide what is urgently needed now and in the coming years to address costly care needs at metro area landfills.

**Pig's Eye Landfill Task Force**

The Partnership strongly supports creating and funding a task force to coordinate remediation and restoration of the Pig's Eye Landfill Superfund site and addressing PFAS contamination of affected water bodies and groundwater. The challenges with this site are significant and complex. Focusing and coordinating solutions among various agencies and interested parties has the promise of creating better outcomes to the benefit of public health, the environment and future users of the area's land and waters.

**Reducing Sources of PFAS, Lead and Cadmium**

The Partnership is very concerned about the persistent presence of PFAS and toxic heavy metals in the state's land, water and other resources, and the risks these substances pose to human health. Several provisions in H.F. 4492 focus on upstream solutions, which better protect public health and are more effective than dealing with legacy costs that taxpayers are often forced to manage after products have been disposed.

- **Identifying and reducing sources of PFAS** and preventing releases into the environment minimizes the potential for PFAS to appear in waste materials and facilities managing those materials.
- Updating current statutes to apply **prohibitions on lead and cadmium** to a wider range of products reduces the challenges of safely managing these products as wastes and prevents pollution from these toxic substances.

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- Allocating \$1 million for a **lead tackle collection program** will help keep this heavy metal from polluting our land and water and reduce the burden on county collection programs.

### **Moving Towards a Circular Economy**

The Partnership supports several one-time provisions that support waste prevention, recycling and organics management to keep waste out of landfills and help counties meet challenging state waste reduction and recycling mandates.

- \$10 million for a **waste prevention and recycling grant and loan program** goes a long way toward meeting the governor's funding request of \$18.9 million to implement needed infrastructure and other projects and help reach state waste diversion goals.
- \$5 million for **multifamily composting pilot grant program** will help local government, building owners, non-profit groups and others keep more compostable materials out of our disposal facilities and landfills. We encourage equal consideration of all applicant groups when making awards, to assure the strongest, most effective projects get funded.
- \$1.5 million for a **zero-waste grant program** will keep more waste electronics, recyclable materials, reusable goods, and organic materials out of our waste stream and support job creation.
- **Standards and labeling requirements for compostable products and packaging** are critical for achieving sustainable organics recycling. Giving consumers, food establishments, recyclers and composting processors clear information on what products are truly compostable helps ensure material delivered to compost sites is clean and ready to compost.
- Developing a **plan for a carpet stewardship program** through stakeholder engagement has the promise of reducing the burdens faced by local government and Minnesota residents in dealing with waste carpet and valuing carpet as a resource for recycling.

### **Responding to Emerald Ash Borer Impacts**

The Partnership strongly supports the provision to allocate \$10 million for grants to replace trees removed because of the emerald ash borer (EAB). This provision is one more important step among the many that are urgently needed to respond to the EAB challenge as this pest continues to spread to more parts of the state. This grant funding will provide a measure of relief to local governments struggling to combat EAB and restore vital tree canopy lost to this pest.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Partnership's positions on H.F. 4492. We encourage the committee to act favorably on these and other provisions to prevent pollution, support activities that advance the goals of the Waste Management Act and address growing needs driven by the emerald ash borer. We stand ready to work together on these important issues for the benefit of our communities and the state.

Sincerely,



Commissioner Fran Miron, Washington County  
Chair, Partnership on Waste and Energy

cc: House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee members