

March 16, 2023

Senator Nick A. Frentz
Chair, Senate Energy, Utilities, Environment, and Climate Committee
3109 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: S.F. 2887 (Emerald Ash Borer response, appropriation for wood dehydrator)

Dear Chair Frentz,

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.

The state requires a range of solutions to respond to the emerald ash borer (EAB) infestation that is now identified in 38 Minnesota counties and continues to spread. Communities are removing and replacing ash trees to slow the spread of EAB as quickly as funding allows. Adequate capacity does not exist to properly manage the surge of waste wood created as counties, cities, private landowners and others battle EAB. Addressing this challenge is a priority concern of the Partnership.

We thank Senator Hoffman for introducing S.F. 2887, presenting an important solution for responsibly managing EAB-related wood waste. This material must be treated as a resource with value, not lost to open burn piles that threaten air quality and public health. State support to allow the Koda biomass facility in Shakopee to purchase wood dehydrating equipment will expand the company's ability to capture the energy value of wood waste and to do so more efficiently, helping to ease the burden faced by the region to properly manage the growing volume of ash trees removed due to EAB.

The Partnership stands ready to work with you, your committee members, state agencies, communities and the private sector to pursue the multitude of solutions needed to respond to EAB and manage the resulting wood waste. We encourage the committee to act favorably on S.F. 2887 and to take urgently necessary legislative action this session to provide additional critically needed solutions to manage this decades-long wood waste challenge brought about by EAB.

Sincerely,



Commissioner Debbie Goettel, Hennepin County
Chair, Partnership on Waste and Energy

cc: Senate Energy, Utilities, Environment, and Climate Committee members

PARTNERSHIP ON WASTE AND ENERGY
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