

March 24, 2023

Representative Fue Lee
Chair, House Capital Investment Committee
485 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Anaerobic Digestion and Organics Management

Dear Chair Lee,

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.

Organics recycling is our biggest opportunity to reduce our waste. Minnesota statute requires metro counties achieve a 75% recycling rate by 2030. Waste sort studies show that organic materials, which includes food scraps, are the largest proportion of our trash – about 25%. When organic materials decompose in a landfill they produce methane, which has a warming effect 84 times greater than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period. During anaerobic digestion, methane is created and captured in a controlled process, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and creating beneficial products.

Infrastructure development must keep pace with organics collection programs. Currently, the metro area is served by only two compost sites that are at or near capacity. Anaerobic digestion provides an opportunity to expand and diversify local organics infrastructure. Through anaerobic digestion organic waste is transformed into clean energy and digestate, a nutrient-rich fertilizer. However, these facilities are costly for local communities to construct and manage and we welcome state investment in this area.

By working together to support anaerobic digestion we can boost organics recycling, reduce greenhouse gases, and reduce the amount of waste headed to our landfills in Minnesota. We support all efforts to invest in anaerobic digestion and ask the legislature to do the same.

Sincerely,



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

cc: House Capital Investment Committee members