

March 26, 2024

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

Re: Support for Anaerobic Digestion and S.F. 4889 (Sen. Mitchell)

Dear Chair Frentz and Members of the Senate Energy, Utilities, Environment, and Climate Committee,

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

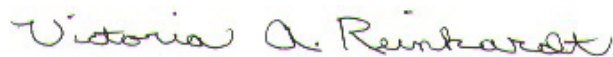
Organic materials, including food waste, make up the largest proportion of our trash—about 25%. Methane from organic materials decomposing in a landfill creates a warming effect 84 times greater than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period. Anaerobic digestion offers a solution to keep organic materials out of landfills, create clean renewable energy and reduce greenhouse gases.

Anaerobic digestion captures methane in a controlled process that creates beneficial products, such as carbon-negative renewable natural gas (RNG) that displaces fossil fuels in transportation or utility applications. The process also produces a digestate that can be used as a nutrient-rich fertilizer, or to create biochar for soil amendment or remediation and carbon sequestration. However, digesters need a significant up-front capital investment to construct.

S.F. 4889 provides essential funding for an anaerobic digestion facility in the southwest metro that will produce about 170,000 MMBtu of RNG and 10,000 tons of biochar annually. This public-private partnership, led by Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy, will help utilities implement the Renewable Natural Gas Innovation Act, help the state meet its climate goals and help the metro area meet a statutory requirement of 75% recycling by 2030.

State investment is critical for the success of local projects. The time is now for the creative financing solutions needed to achieve energy, environmental and economic benefits for the Twin Cities region and the state. By working together, we can create renewable energy, reduce greenhouse gases and reduce the amount of waste headed to landfills in Minnesota.

Sincerely,



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