

## MEMORANDUM

May 10, 2024

**Representative Rick Hansen**  
**Representative Kristi Purcell**  
**Representative Leigh Finke**  
**Representative Sydney Jordan**  
**Representative Josh Heintzeman**

**Senator FOUNG Hawj**  
**Senator Jennifer A. McEwen**  
**Senator Kelly L. Morrison**  
**Senator Liz Boldon**  
**Senator Carla J. Nelson**

Dear Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Supplemental Conference Committee (H.F. 3911/S.F. 3887):

The Partnership on Waste and Energy (Partnership) is a Joint Powers Board (Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington counties) working to address waste management and energy issues. We appreciate the opportunity to express support for several provisions of H.F. 3911 to protect public health and the environment and address threats to our climate.

### **Packaging Waste and Cost Reduction Act**

The Partnership strongly supports the Packaging Waste and Cost Reduction Act. We need to get the state out of “business-as-usual” and get us to the next level to meet state recycling mandates and zero waste ambitions. Resources that could be recycled or composted are instead creating mountains of trash in our landfills.

This historic and transformative Act will:

- Hold packaging and paper product producers accountable to help fix the waste problem they have created.
- Build on the state’s recycling collection and processing infrastructure, with the producers responsible for the waste, not taxpayers, funding the gaps where we lose recyclables now.
- Increase statewide access to reuse, recycling and composting programs.
- Reduce the financial burden on individuals and taxpayers for recycling services.
- Incentivize redesign to make packaging reusable, recyclable or compostable.

### **Priority Provisions We Support**

***Clean lighting:*** The Partnership supports restricting the use of mercury in lighting to protect public health and reduce risk in homes and businesses, as well as in county household hazardous waste collection programs that currently handle mercury-containing lighting products.

***Boat wrap product stewardship:*** The Partnership supports engaging manufacturers in creating a program to keep boat wrap out of landfills and offer consumers convenient recycling options, all without burdening taxpayers. The Partnership appreciates that local government is specifically included in stakeholder consultation during stewardship plan development. We support the Senate bill provisions that specifically include reuse as a feature of the stewardship program. We urge caution in creating a definition for recycling that could conflict with the current statutory definition.

We encourage language that is broadly inclusive of recycling end markets while excluding conversion for fuel or energy uses, which are not allowed in the current definition of recycling.

***Critical materials recovery task force:*** The Partnership supports efforts that strengthen systems to recycle electronic waste. We support including the Solid Waste Administrators Association and the Minnesota Resource Recovery Association on the Task Force to represent county perspectives.

***Tree removal and planting funding:*** The Partnership supports funding for tree removal and planting, particularly through the Community Tree Planting grants in the House language. Resource-strapped communities need funding now as emerald ash borer destroys community forests and urban canopy in a growing number of counties (50 and counting).

### **Other Provisions We Support**

The Partnership supports other provisions that appear in one or both bills, including:

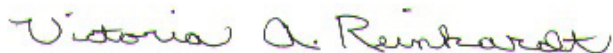
- Notification of local government when funds from the Metropolitan Landfill Contingency Action Trust or Closed Landfill Investment Fund are transferred or spent for purposes other than originally intended.
- Rulemaking for the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Capital Assistance Program.
- Multifamily composting grants.

### **Provision We Support with Concerns**

***Food and food waste hierarchy:*** The Partnership shares the state's priority on addressing food waste. It is critical to prevent food from becoming waste and manage what is discarded using strategies that best reduce impacts on the climate and keep food out of landfills. The Partnership appreciates the recognition in the proposed food and food waste hierarchy provision that anaerobic digestion to produce valuable biogas and digestate products is an important climate protection and landfilling reduction strategy, and as such must be placed on the same level as composting. However, we advise against establishing a duplicate hierarchy within the state's highest waste management policy declaration in 115A.02. Doing so can create confusion and potential misalignment with implementing the long-standing waste management hierarchy.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Partnership's positions as the committee creates an omnibus bill that best advances state public health and environmental protection goals. For further information on these and other Partnership positions, please contact Rob Vanasek at Capitol Hill Associates ([rob@capitolhillassoc.com](mailto:rob@capitolhillassoc.com); 612-964-4876) and Sam Richie at Fryberger ([srichie@fryberger.com](mailto:srichie@fryberger.com); 218-301-9758).

Sincerely,



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