

April 19, 2024

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

Re: Support for Anaerobic Digestion and Organics Management, H.F. 3138 (Rep. Hollins)

Dear Chair Lee,

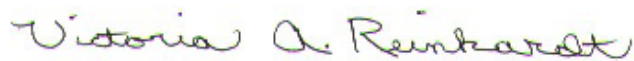
The Partnership on Waste and Energy (Partnership) is a Joint Powers Board consisting of Hennepin, Ramsey, and Washington counties, formed to address waste management and energy issues. The Partnership seeks to end waste, promote renewable energy, and enhance the health and resiliency of the communities 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 up to 55% of the methane in landfill gas. Methane is a greenhouse gas with 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, significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions compared to landfilling food scraps.

Infrastructure development must keep pace with organics collection programs. Currently, the metro area is served by only two compost sites with finite 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.

State investment is critical for the success of local projects, such as the public-private partnership led by Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy to develop an anaerobic digestion facility in the southwest metro. The time is now for creative financing solutions needed to achieve state waste, climate and energy policy goals. In the event there are cash opportunities in this year's capital improvements bill, please consider the request in H.F. 3138. By working together, 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 Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County
Chair, Partnership on Waste and Energy