



April 20, 2020

Representative Rick Hansen  
Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Division  
407 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chairman Hansen:

The Partnership on Waste and Energy (the “Partnership”) is a Joint Powers Board consisting of Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington Counties. We work together on issues relating to the proper management of solid waste, including opportunities to reduce or redirect sources of solid waste we are obliged to manage.

There are three provisions of House File 4498 for which the Partnership would like to indicate our support:

- **Protect Community Forests by Managing Ash for Emerald Ash Borer:**

Section 2, subd. 6 (b), provides \$3.5 million to reduce Emerald Ash Borer (“EAB”) through planning and management practices, including grants for communities to manage EAB and plant a diversity of trees in our community forests. These funds will help to establish a program of intervention to slow the spread of the EAB.

- **Emerald Ash Borer: Maintaining Forests and Benefits:**

Section 2, subd. 6 (e), provides \$700,000 to the University of Minnesota to support ongoing experiments to determine EAB impacts and mitigation measures. This work will be part of the broader solution to the EAB infestation.

Counties will need an ongoing partnership with the State to address the volume of waste wood material that will need to be managed. We look forward to continuing our dialogue with the Legislature as we work together to slow the spread of EAB, preserving or timely replacing ash trees, addressing wood waste management needs and developing new markets for ash.

**PARTNERSHIP ON WASTE AND ENERGY**  
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- **Diverting Unsold Food from Landfills and Reducing Greenhouse Gases:**

Section 2, subd. 7(c), provides \$130,000 from the Trust Fund to divert unsold food to food shelves in order to prevent the material from creating greenhouse gas emissions at our landfills.

The Partnership Counties have worked extensively on energy issues which emerge in the context of solid waste management. We are very interested in and supportive of efforts to remove food waste from our solid waste management processes in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

These provisions specifically respond to positions taken in the Partnership's 2020 Legislative Platform. We thank you for your leadership and will continue to work with you to address these issues in the years to come.

Sincerely,

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

cc: Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County  
Commissioner Fran Miron, Washington County  
Clay Schwartzwalter, Legislative Assistant  
Peter Strohmeier, Committee Administrator

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