

April 21, 2025

Co-Chair Zack Stephenson  
House Ways & Means Committee  
658 Cedar Street  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor Centennial Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Co-Chair Paul Torkelson  
House Ways & Means Committee  
658 Cedar Street  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Centennial Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 5515

Dear Co-Chairs Stephenson and Torkelson:

I would like to express my appreciation to Co-Chairs Fischer and Heintzeman and their colleagues on the Environment & Natural Resources committee for the work to develop the Environment & Natural Resources omnibus bill, HF 2439.

HF 2439 funds the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) base budget, which represents ongoing core work to protect the environment and human health including issuing permits, monitoring for pollution, and cleaning up contamination. Recognizing the difficult budget forecast facing the state and the need for tough decisions, I appreciate the committee's judicious approach to distributing funding cuts. I would also like to thank the committee for including MPCA's air appropriation increase and an extension in availability of Closed Landfill Investment (CLIF) funds in their bill.

The Governor's revised budget recommendations fund important and necessary work at the MPCA. In particular, and of highest priority, the **MPCA operating adjustment** is needed to cover the cost to maintain current service levels. As we work together on new ideas like additional engagement with Tribal Nations and reforming permitting process to be more efficient, it is critical for the agency to first secure adequate funding for our core work.

While I recognize the challenging spending targets within which the committee was working, I would also like to highlight other funding needs contained within the Governor's budget recommendations that are not included in this bill:

- **Permitting reform**, including staffing needs to address backlogged permits and provide necessary support to regulated parties (\$2.68 million from the General Fund, \$1.05 million from Environmental Fund). The Governor's recommendations also include policy language with no associated cost.
- Dedicated staff to support the emerging **Sustainable Aviation Fuel** industry (\$1.4 million from the Environmental Fund)
- Staffing and a small budget to enforce existing law on **mercury in skin-lightening creams** (\$430,000 from the Environmental Fund)
- Efforts to reduce landfilling of **wasted food** and support redirecting food to higher-value uses, including feeding Minnesotans (\$700,000 from the Environmental Fund)
- Funds to address a large backlog of contaminated **site assessments** (\$700,000 from the Remediation Fund)

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The Governor's budget recommendations also include several items for which there is no net cost, or even a cost savings. I hope these items can be considered as the bill moves forward:

- Stewardship program for **electronic waste** (no net cost)
- Statutory correction to **unlock federal funds for PFAS treatment** (no net cost)
- Technical correction to return **repayments to revolving funds** for Small Business Environmental Improvement Loans and Environmental Assistance Grants and Loans (no net cost)
- Closure of a loophole that hinders **recovery of costs for cleanup** of certain spills and releases (no net cost; estimated revenue of \$400,000)
- Clarification to legislative language regarding MPCA's **access to the Closed Landfill Investment Fund (CLIF)** (in addition to the extension of availability of these funds that was included)
- Transfer of already-appropriated **PFAS biomonitoring funds** to the Minnesota Department of Health (no net cost)

I look forward to working together in the coming weeks on how to advance a mix of funding and policy proposals that accomplish our shared goals and meet the expectations of Minnesotans.

This year's legislative session has presented unique challenges and opportunities to work collaboratively. I am grateful to members and staff alike for engaging with the administration in a productive and collegial process and I look forward to continuing that work in the final weeks of session.

Sincerely,



*This document has been electronically signed.*

Katrina Kessler, P.E.

Commissioner