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Representative Frank Hornstein
House Transportation Finance & Policy Committee
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

January 26, 2023

Dear Chair Hornstein and Members of the House Transportation Finance and Policy Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support for HF498, a bill to establish and fund a Highways for Habitat program and living snow fences under the Department of Transportation.

We would like to express our support for the activities included in HF498 that would expand habitat and support the health of Minnesota's habitat and tree cover. Science affirms that natural climate solutions, including tree planting, soil health practices, and land restoration and management, are critical to reaching Minnesota's climate goals and deliver other important co-benefits for Minnesotans. These programs would invest in the state's natural infrastructure while also providing important co-benefits for wildlife, pollinators, clean air, and clean water.

In addition to these programs, The Nature Conservancy recognizes there are many tools in the toolbox to sustain and grow the health of our forests and working lands by using a right-fit approach for each type of landowner and landscape. We encourage the legislature to consider the programs in HF498 in addition to natural climate solutions investments in Scientific and Natural Areas, Wildlife Management Areas, the state tree nursery, reforestation, forest stand improvement, and community tree planting.

Thank you for considering HF498 and your work on behalf of Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Pinkalla
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