



May 7, 2022

Dear Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Conference Committee:

Metro Cities, representing the shared interests of cities in the metropolitan region, appreciates the opportunity to comment on the omnibus bills being considered by this conference committee.

Emerald Ash Borer – Cities are facing significant costs for the identification, removal, replacement, and treatment of emerald ash borer (EAB). Metro Cities supports the \$10.15 million found in Article 1, Sec. 3 of the House bill for grants to local governments replace trees that were removed because of EAB.

PFAS – Perfluoralkyl and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) substances pose an environmental threat to communities across the region and state. Metro Cities supports the \$2 million in Article 1, Sec. 2 of the House bill for grants for projects that attempt to prevent PFAS contamination. The association stands ready to engage with the legislature and other stakeholders as best practices around monitoring and managing PFAS continue to be developed.

Lawns to Legumes – Metro Cities supports the \$5 million in FY 2023 for the Lawns to Legumes program found in Article 1, Sec. 4 of the House language. Metro Cities supports state funding for programs that create pollinator habitat on both public and private lands and would support expanding eligibility of the Lawns to Legumes program to include municipality-owned land.

Local Inflow and Infiltration Mitigation – Metro Cities supports state funding or metropolitan cities to assist with improvements to municipal wastewater systems to reduce inflow and infiltration to the regional sanitary sewer system and supports funding to assist property owners in mitigating private property inflow-infiltration. Metro Cities appreciates the \$2.5 million in the House bill to help metropolitan cities address inflow and infiltration (Article 1, Sec. 6).

Regional Parks – In the seven-county metropolitan area, regional parks essentially serve as state parks, and the state should continue to provide capital funding for the acquisition, development and improvement of these parks in a manner that is equitable with funding for state parks. Metro Cities supports the \$2.5 million from the general fund and \$750 thousand from the natural resources fund for regional parks and trails included in the House bill (Article 1, Sec. 6).

Metropolitan Landfill Contingency Action Trust (MLCAT) Repayment – Metro Cities supports the \$29.05 million repayment from the general fund into the metropolitan area landfill contingency action trust (MLCAT) account (House Art. 1, Sec. 2). Making this account whole will help ensure its ability to address the environmental needs of the seven MLCAT-eligible landfills in the metropolitan region.

Metro Cities opposes the expanded enforcement and penalty authority over city water supply permits included in Article 2, Sec. 39-47 of the House language. Metro Cities' policies emphasize the importance of adequate and sustainable water supply. The proposed language imposes harsh penalties and could result in significant mandates that could have dramatic impacts on local budgets. There are no examples of public water suppliers failing to address issues.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Lund".

Mike Lund
Government Relations Specialist