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March 29, 2022

Representative Paul Marquart
Chair, House Taxes Committee

Re: HF2367 (Hornstein): Solid waste management tax revenue allocation

Dear Chair Marquart:

The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) is a membership-based organization representing all 87 Minnesota counties and the Minnesota Solid Waste Administrators Association (SWAA) is an AMC affiliate that represents the interests of county and waste districts professional staff. Counties have specific waste management and reduction responsibilities delegated to them through state statute, and both AMC and SWAA advocate for policies and funding that improve and promote responsible waste management and reduce environmental impacts of solid waste.

We encourage your support of HF2367 to dedicate all Solid Waste Management Tax (SWMT) revenues to waste management and landfill diversion efforts.

The SWMT was created for; and should be used to manage solid waste and reduce its environmental impacts. Currently, less than 20% of total SWMT collections are dedicated to county solid waste management efforts (\$18.45 million), and yet 30 percent is directed to the general fund for purposes unrelated to waste management. AMC and SWAA have long supported allocating 100 percent of the revenue generated by the SWMT to state and county waste management activities.

SCORE grants provide local governments with resources to reduce waste, foster reuse and recycling, divert organics, and prevent environmental pollution from landfills. Locally programs have proven successful and statewide waste reduction and landfill diversion is paying dividends, protecting surface and groundwater resources, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions produced by landfilling.

Unfortunately, growth in solid waste volumes continues to outpace growth in recycling – state investments in local government efforts, through SCORE, have been largely stagnant. Local governments have been stepping up with significant investment of local revenues, but we need to right-size SCORE grant levels to meet our solid waste challenges head-on and improve environmental outcomes.

AMC and SWAA appreciate this opportunity to share our support of HF2367 and encourage the committee to fully fund this proposal.

Sincerely,

Commissioner Todd Patzer, Lac qui Parle County
President, Association of Minnesota Counties

Laine Sletta, Brown County
President, Minnesota Solid Waste Administrators Association