

MEMORANDUM

May 5, 2021

Senator Torrey Westrom
Senator Gene Dornik
Senator Michael Goggin
Senator Bruce Anderson
Senator Erin Murphy

Representative Mike Sundin
Representative Samantha Vang
Representative Gene Pelowski
Representative Todd Lippert
Representative Nathan Nelson

Dear Members of the Agriculture and Broadband Finance Conference Committee (S.F. 958):

The Partnership on Waste and Energy is a Joint Powers Board consisting of Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington counties, formed to address waste management and energy issues, which often intersect. We seek to end waste, promote renewable energy and enhance the health and resiliency of communities we serve while advancing equity and responding to the challenges of a changing climate. The Partnership would like to express its strong support for two issues that are addressed in the Agriculture and Broadband Finance omnibus bill.

Department of Agriculture Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Funding

One of the great challenges facing counties in our responsibility to manage solid waste is the growing surge of wood waste created by the removal of ash trees infested with EAB, which to date is found in 27 counties and climbing.

We urge the Conferees to adopt the Senate provision for the Department of Agriculture appropriation of \$300,000 in each year for “rapid detection, identification, containment, control and management of high-priority plant pests and pathogens including Emerald Ash Borer.”
(Senate Provision Page R2)

These resources will ensure that the Department of Agriculture experts remain a vital part of the team working to respond effectively to this growing problem by slowing the spread of EAB.

Advancing Biofuels Development

The Partnership seeks forward-looking opportunities to develop useful products from waste. Recycling of food and other organics, over 25% of our trash, will be necessary if metropolitan counties are to achieve the 75% recycling goal by 2030 as established in state law. Anaerobic digestion and other technologies are emerging as valuable options to increase organics processing in Minnesota. The Partnership sees great potential to produce biofuels from these technologies. Policies supporting biofuels production from organics could substantially reduce greenhouse gas emissions and climate impacts of waste while reducing the state’s reliance on fossil fuels.

The Senate proposes an annual appropriation of \$3,500,000 for grants for equipment to dispense biofuels to the public. Ensuring consumer access to biofuels is essential for the development of this market. (*Senate provision Page R10*)

The House provides \$2 million in each year of the biennium for the Biofuels Infrastructure Financial Assistance Program established in the bill. (*House appropriations Page R12; language establishing the Program Pages R40-R43*)

The Partnership respectfully requests that the Conferees include in the final omnibus bill the higher appropriation level for equipment and infrastructure along with the new Biofuels Infrastructure Financial Assistance Program language.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Partnership's support for these provisions. Please contact Sam Richie at Fryberger, Buchanan, Smith & Frederick, P.A. for further information on the Partnership's positions on these issues (srichie@fryberger.com, 218-301-9758).

Sincerely,



Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County
Chair, Partnership on Waste and Energy

cc: Joel Hanson, Committee Administrator, Senate
Nancy Conley, Committee Administrator, House
Commissioner Debbie Goettel, Hennepin County
Commissioner Fran Miron, Washington County