



April 1, 2025

Re: H.F. 2620 and H.F. 2621 – Emerald Ash Borer Funding

Chair Fischer, Chair Heintzman, and members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee:

The League of Minnesota Cities appreciates the opportunity to express support for HF 2620 and HF 2621 and thanks Rep. Finke and the other bill authors for bringing these proposals forward. The impacts of emerald ash borer are spreading to more and more Minnesota communities every year and the local costs of managing that problem through treatment, removal, replacement, and disposal of affected trees are significant.

While we are aware of the challenges that the state's current budget projections create for allocating new expenditures, the risk that dead and dying ash trees play to public health and safety make this a priority that should receive as much financial backing as possible. The benefits that healthy urban forest canopies provide for stormwater management, air quality, energy savings, greenhouse gas reduction, property values, and community livability make this a very worthwhile investment.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig A. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Craig A. Johnson
Sr. Intergovernmental Relations Representative
League of Minnesota Cities



April 2, 2025

Re: H.F. 2620 and H.F. 2621-Emerald Ash Borer Funding

Chair Fischer, Chair Heintzman and members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee:

The Minnesota Shade Tree Advisory Committee (MNSTAC), which serves as the state of Minnesota's Urban Forest Council, appreciates the opportunity to express our unwavering support for HF 2620 and HF 2621. These two bills offer continued support to build on the investments made thus far by your committee in preparing and assisting communities for the unrelenting impacts of significant tree loss due to emerald ash borer (EAB).

The impacts of EAB are increasing to more and more communities with each passing year. Minnesota is home to the most ash trees of any state in the country, and as such, we have the most to lose. These continued investments will assist communities in removing dead and dangerous trees, replanting new trees to lessen the impact on the environment, and providing opportunities to utilize the wood generated-all of these components will ensure a greener future for generations to come.

Thank you for your time and your continued attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Karen M. Zumach

Karen M. Zumach
Chair, MN Shade Tree Advisory Committee

April 3, 2025

Representative Peter Fischer
Co-Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee
5th Floor Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for H.F. 2620, H.F. 2621, Responding to EAB and Wood Waste Challenges

Dear Co-Chair Fischer, Co-Chair Heintzeman and Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee,

The Partnership on Waste and Energy (Partnership) is a Joint Powers Board consisting of Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington counties, formed to address waste management and energy issues. The Partnership seeks to end waste, promote renewable energy and enhance the health and resiliency of the communities we serve while advancing equity and responding to the challenges of a changing climate.

The Partnership supports H.F. 2620 and H.F. 2621 as two of many solutions urgently needed to manage the state's expanding emerald ash borer (EAB) infestation and address the crisis of inadequate capacity for responsibly managing the resulting wood waste. Fifty-four counties are now subject to ash quarantines as EAB devastates community forests across the state. Local communities face limited financial resources. They need the state to step up to help manage and recover from compounding impacts on our community forests.

H.F. 2620 provides vital funding to address significant inadequacies in the metro region's wood waste management system at a time when wood waste volumes continue to grow beyond current capacity. Communities and residents are experiencing skyrocketing costs as a result. Pinch points in the system drive more open burning of wood waste which exacerbates the state's air quality challenges, threatens public health and squanders opportunities for higher uses of this resource. Funding in both bills for Community Tree Planting grants allows resource-strapped communities across the state to continue to remove and replace trees affected by EAB.

Thank you for hearing these bills. We encourage the committee to act favorably on both bills to address these critical needs in our communities.

Sincerely,



Commissioner Fran Miron, Washington County
Chair, Partnership on Waste and Energy



April 2, 2025

Dear Chair Fischer, Chair Heintzeman, and Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee:

Metro Cities, representing the shared interests of cities across the metropolitan area, appreciates the opportunity to comment on HF 2620 (Finke) and HF 2621 (Finke). Metro Cities supports both bills.

Urban forests are an essential local infrastructure component. Emerald ash borer (EAB) continues to threaten public investments in trees and costs associated with EAB can be greatly consequential for city budgets. Metro Cities supports the goals of HF 2620 and HF 2621 to appropriate funds for the planting and improvement of trees in cities throughout the state, and further appreciates the particular focus in these two bills on tree canopy and wood waste needs in the metropolitan region.

Economic and environmental gains for storm water management, climate change mitigation, air quality management, tourism, recreation, and other benefits must be protected from tree loss. A lack of timely investment in urban forests costs cities significantly more in the long run.

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'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Mike' and last name 'Lund' clearly distinguishable.

Mike Lund
Government Relations Specialist
Metro Cities