



January 31st, 2023

TO: House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee

FROM: Andrea Lovoll, Legislative Director, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

RE: HF 645, HF 672, HF 673

Chair Hansen and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for your service to the people of Minnesota and thank you for the opportunity to testify on HF 645, HF 672, HF 673 (Lee). Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA) is a nonprofit organization with almost 50 years of experience using law and science to protect Minnesota's environment and the health of its people.

MCEA supports all three of these bills. Together, these bills advance environmental justice and enhance community involvement in governmental processes.

HF 645 codifies the commonsense idea that communities affected by harmful pollution should have a say in how settlement money collected by the MPCA for pollution permit violations is spent. MCEA supports this bill and in particular, the requirement that the community health board meet directly with the residents and incorporate their concerns and ideas into a project that benefits the residents. This type of involvement and responsiveness to people who live in communities often overburdened by pollution is a cornerstone of environmental justice.

MCEA also supports HF 672 regarding non-expiring state air permits. MCEA and many other groups have supported these reforms for several legislative cycles and we believe there is no reason to not adopt them immediately. Public informational meetings at regular intervals serves to bridge the gap between owners of permitted facilities and the residents who live and work nearby. Beyond the intrinsic benefits of transparency to our democratic system, we expect these meetings to help keep the owners and operators accountable and will likely increase permit compliance and reduce pollution.¹

Finally, MCEA supports HF 673 regarding air toxics. Air toxics reporting has been adopted and enacted by several states and MCEA believes it is time for Minnesota to follow suit. Many communities in Minnesota, largely low-income and communities of color, are overburdened by a toxic soup of pollution from a deliberate concentration of polluting facilities and factories. The recordkeeping, measuring, and assessing of air toxic emissions are important steps for

¹ David A. Hindin & Jon D. Silberman, *Designing More Effective Rules and Permits*, 7 GEO. WASH. J. ENERGY & ENV'T L. 103, 118 (2016).

(https://gwujeel.files.wordpress.com/2016/05/completed_jeel_vol7_issue2_designingmoreeffectiverulesandpermits.pdf)

transparency and for environmental justice. Facilities that would be impacted by this law already have a good sense of the materials and chemicals that are inputted into their processes. This bill would allow all of us to understand which chemicals – and in what amounts – are being emitted from those facilities.

Thank you,

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