



The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota,
North Dakota, South Dakota
1101 West River Parkway, Suite 200
Minneapolis, MN 55415-1291

tel (612) 331.0700
fax (612) 331.0770
nature.org

Representative Liz Olson, Chair
House Ways and Means Committee
479 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

May 8, 2024

Dear Chair Olson and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee,

As the Committee considers the delete-all amendment to HF5220, we write to share our appreciation for the proposal's focus on trees. Science shows that natural climate solutions, like tree planting, have the power to contribute to 30 percent of the solution to climate change.

While it is essential to ensure tree canopy expands across Minnesota, from boulevards in urban communities and backyards, to forest-scale private lands and public lands, there is significant opportunity for impact at the forest-scale. An analysis conducted by The Nature Conservancy shows that in Minnesota, reforestation is the top natural climate solution to sequester carbon and mitigate the impacts of climate change – not to mention the many benefits for drinking water, habitat, and flood mitigation among others.

We are pleased at the inclusion of many line items related to tree-planting, including Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reforestation and betterment of buildings improvements to the DNR state forest nursery, in addition to community tree planting grants, because supporting forest cover at scale is essential for realizing needed benefits.

Based on information provided from the DNR, reforestation costs on state-owned lands are approximately \$4 million annually, an amount which does not account for the opportunity to expand tree planting for additional benefit. **We respectfully suggest the investment in reforestation be at least \$8 million to support the full scale benefits of a crucial Minnesota asset—the state's forests.**

Thank you for your work and your continued efforts.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Pinkalla
Government Relations Director
The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota

Angelica Anderson
Government Relations Specialist
The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota