

April 8, 2025

Representative Fue Lee
Co-Chair, House Capital Investment Committee
5th Floor Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for H.F. 1078, Washington County Wood Waste and Diseased Tree Utilization Program

Dear Co-Chair Lee, Co-Chair Franson and Members of the Capital Investment 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 communities we serve while advancing equity and responding to the challenges of a changing climate.

Wood Waste and Diseased Tree Utilization Investments Needed

Minnesota's Metropolitan Solid Waste Management Policy Plan, adopted by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency in 2024, requires counties to respond to rapidly increasing amounts of wood waste from EAB-infested and other diseased trees. Washington County's wood recovery program has a goal of aligning the county's existing and future collection sites with the Policy Plan's wood waste hierarchy so that recoverable logs and unrecoverable tree debris can be put to the highest and best possible use. The investments planned by Washington County to better manage wood before it is wasted will offer places where trimmed or removed trees can be sustainably recovered and processed into valuable products while relieving pressure on the strained capacity at existing regional facilities handling wood waste, such as District Energy's St. Paul Cogeneration facility.

State investment in local projects, such as Washington County's efforts to establish badly needed additional wood processing capacity via a wood waste and diseased tree utilization program, will help achieve state waste, climate and energy policy goals. By working together, we can capture the value from local tree debris, reduce greenhouse gases and reduce the amount of open burning of wood piles in Minnesota. The Partnership supports all efforts to invest in wood waste management infrastructure, including Washington County's request for \$4 million in bonding for the Wood Waste and Diseased Tree Utilization Program.

Sincerely,



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