

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

Co-Chair Mary Franson
House Capital Investment Committee
3rd Floor Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 4, 2026

Dear Co-Chair Lee, Co-Chair Franson, and Members of the Capital Investment Committee:

As the Committee reviews the capital budget proposal for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), we write to convey The Nature Conservancy's support pertaining to forestry-related activities that could be included under the agency's Betterment of Public Lands request and that we believe are worth elevating.

The Nature Conservancy has continually supported investments in state forestry needs that science demonstrates can provide many public purposes including carbon sequestration, water quality improvement, water quantity management, wildfire mitigation, outdoor recreation, habitat, and timber products among other environmental benefits.

We recommend the committee continue to make critical investments in the state's forest assets at a meaningful scale in the following two areas:

- 1) **\$10 million for DNR Reforestation** - This program is heavily dependent on bonding appropriations and ensures tree planting after timber harvests and on state-owned lands that were historically forested. DNR indicates \$4 million per year is needed to keep up with minimum reforestation activities, but in order to respond to the challenges of forest pests, natural disasters, and climate change, investing above the minimum will support long-term forest health and resilience in the face of these impacts.
- 2) **\$8 million for DNR Forest Stand Improvement** - This program complements reforestation efforts and supports the "asset management" associated with reforestation and has often been included within past reforestation appropriations in bonding bills. It includes the work of planting, seeding, and browse protection that ensure the trees planted are able to survive. This work would also encompass forest management activities related to invasive pest control, like spruce budworm and Emerald Ash Borer, along with site preparation and replanting following natural disasters like wildfire.

We appreciate the committee's commitment to addressing climate and environmental challenges, including those involving Minnesota's forests. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Pinkalla
Government Relations Director
The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota



Angelica Day
Government Relations Specialist
The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota