



January 11, 2021

To: Representative Rick Hansen, Chair and Members
Environment and Natural Resources Finance Policy Committee

From: Karen Zumach, President, Minnesota Shade Tree Advisory Committee (MNSTAC)

Re: HF 30

Dear Mr. Chair and Members:

We are writing in support of HF 30, appropriating funding from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust fund (ENRTF) for proposals submitted and recommended for funding during the 2020 Legislative session. As the State's Urban Forest Council, our role is to advise on behalf of our State's urban and community forests. Included in this bill is critical funding for communities to manage the invasive pest, the emerald ash borer (EAB), a pest that is on track to impact our urban and community forests in ways that have not been seen since the days of Dutch elm disease.

EAB was first discovered in Saint Paul in 2010. Eleven years later, a dangerously infested tree removed in the City of Saint Paul today will not be replanted until **2024** under their current budget limitations. Loss of tree canopy on this scale will impact our State's climate goals as well as the quality of our air and water-subjects the ENRTF were designed to protect.

Communities across the State are being impacted by the ravages of EAB, not just to their urban forests, but also to their municipal budgets. The DNR's most recent data, from 2010, suggests that ash trees, the sole target of EAB, comprise 20-40% of the trees within our communities. HF 30 contains funding in the form of grants for communities to manage EAB and provides critical funding for tree inventories, management strategies and replanting-important steps in sustaining and rebuilding a resilient community forest.

We respectfully request your support for this important appropriation.

Sincerely,

Karen M. Zumach
President, Mn Shade Tree Advisory Committee