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Chair Representative Rick Hansen
Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee
407 State Office Building
75 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: House File 2904

March 24, 2022

Chair Hansen and members of the Committee:

Science affirms that our forests and grasslands are important natural and working lands that provide multiple benefits for carbon sequestration, habitat, water quality and quantity, recreation and tourism, and much more. These benefits are important to maintaining Minnesotans' way of life. Efforts to support the maintenance, health and sustainability of our forests and grasslands are paramount.

A recent analysis conducted by The Nature Conservancy and American Forests identifies nearly 3 million acres of Minnesota lands that could support additional reforestation or afforestation. In the face of drought-killed trees, pests like emerald ash borer, and evolving forest conditions as a result of climate change, the benefits we get from Minnesota's tree cover are at risk. It is imperative we invest in one of the state's best assets: trees. State, county, city, tribal and private lands all have different opportunities and needs to support forest health and tree planting.

As the Committee considers HF2904, we would like to express our support for the activities included in the bill that will support the health of Minnesota's forests and tree cover through conservation planting assistance to private landowners under the Board of Water and Soil Resources, living snow fences through the Department of Transportation, and ash tree replacement grants to local units of government.

In addition to these programs, The Nature Conservancy recognizes there are many critical tools in the toolbox to sustain and grow the health of our forests and working lands by using a right-fit approach for each type of landowner and landscape. We encourage the legislature to consider the programs in HF2904 in addition to investments in the Badoura State Forest Nursery, reforestation, Forests for the Future, community tree planting, and private forest management.

Thank you for your consideration of investments that would benefit expanded tree planting.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Pinkalla
Government Relations Manager
The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota

100%

100% Campaign
705 Raymond Ave. - Suite 100
Saint Paul, MN 55114
www.100percentmn.org

March 24, 2022

Chair Hansen and Members of the Committee,

We are writing to share our support for Rep. Todd Lippert's House File 2904.

The bill would accelerate tree planting in Minnesota through three programs: conservation planting, living snow fences, and ash tree replacement. Each approach is a sensible and strategic response to urgent needs for Minnesotans.

First, **conservation tree planting is an important strategy for addressing our changing climate, but it also has significant co-benefits for Minnesotans.** Tree cover serves as a carbon sink and, depending on where they are planted, can be an effective adaptation strategy, both improving the resiliency of land and providing shade from heat. Additionally, tree planting can be used as part of strategy to improve water quality, protect wildlife habitat, and control invasive species. Conservation tree planting is an approach that virtually every Minnesotan can agree on.

The bill's second program also provides significant co-benefits for Minnesotans by making winter driving safer and winter road maintenance cleaner and less costly. **Living snow fences are a smart way to trap blowing snow before it reaches roadways and impedes drivers.** It reduces the need for plowing and salting. Some living snow fences also reduce soil erosion and provide avian and pollinator wildlife habitat. They are an important natural climate solution that also serves to keep Minnesota's drivers safer.

Finally, the bill provides for tree replacement in communities impacted by the Emerald Ash Borer, an invasive species in Minnesota. The removal and replacement of these trees is a significant cost for some communities. Many municipalities across the state have literally tens of thousands of trees at risk. **This bill would provide support in the places that most urgently need this assistance: environmental justice areas.** In many of these areas, trees provide significant climate and health benefits, improving air quality and providing shade during our warming summers.

Minnesota has an opportunity to accelerate our tree planting in 2022. With investments like these, Minnesota could get on track to plant **over five million trees per year, one tree for every Minnesotan.**

Please support House File 2904.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Andy', written in a cursive style.

Chris Conry

Campaign Director

100% Campaign

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