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April 13, 2023

Capital Investment Committee
c/o House Capital Investments Chair Fue Lee
485 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Amendments to Bills HF1132 and HF749

Thank you for the opportunity to comment with this written letter regarding proposed amendments in bills HF1132 and HF749 related to the removal of the exemption of water and wastewater facilities from the Sustainability 2030 building certification. My name is Morgan Salo, and I am a licensed water and wastewater engineer in the state of MN. I am enthusiastic about the environment and ensuring that we have clean water for my kids and for everyone in the state for generations. Upon writing this, I understand that changes may be made to the bill in the committee, but we have not had a chance to review those changes when this letter was written.

As Minnesotans, we have a duty to protect our environment and its resources, and to protect our people. Everyone should have access to affordable, sustainable, clean drinking water that is treated to remove potentially harmful components. Each community in this State has water and wastewater needs. These are needs for residents and the environment. These projects are built in our communities to help clean the environment. They are built to allow all of us to use the lakes, rivers, and streams, for the recreation that we as Minnesotans all enjoy. These projects benefit the health of Minnesotans, and the health of the environment and create a safer environment for all of us in the State.

Removing the exemption for these critical pieces of infrastructure will impact the environment, increase health risks, and severely impact project costs and project timelines with no clear benefit. Water and wastewater projects are often funded with a combination of Federal and State dollars. The cost, health, and public safety implications for many communities in the State of MN are large. These amendments will add time and cost but provide little to no additional benefit to the engineering and construction. There is no clear plan or path forward for this process.

If these changes are made, then communities in the State will no longer be able to afford the infrastructure required to provide safe, sustainable, and affordable drinking water and to effectively treat and remove pollutants from wastewater to receiving streams. There is a risk that by delaying the process and adding more steps, these critical projects won't get done.

The existing project selection and design process wastewater treatment, projects already evaluate maintenance and operation expenses, including but not limited to energy conservation, and both Federal and State requirements for health and human safety and to protect the environment. Please consider not amending the current language and keeping exemptions for water and wastewater treatment facilities.

Representative Fue Lee

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The impacts on local economies and their ability to survive would be large. And these changes have the potential to and would set back environmental gains we have accomplished with pollutant removal if projects are delayed or not constructed due to increased planning and design costs.

Sincerely,

Bolton & Menk, Inc.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Morgan Salo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Morgan" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Salo".

Morgan Salo, P.E

Environmental Project Engineer

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