

February 13, 2021

Minnesota House of Representatives
Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee
430 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Hansen and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of support for Representative Lee's bills, HF 168 and HF 502. HF 168 proposes modifications to the existing cumulative pollution analysis requirement before an air quality permit is issued, increasing protective investigations in communities with high pollution. This policy informs decision-making with a health-protective analysis that does not currently exist for impacted residents. HF 503 proposes requiring public informational meetings regularly for facilities with non-expiring permits, which increases the transparency and relationship development between facilities and nearby residents.

In 2017, the City of Minneapolis designated the Northside and Southside Green Zones as areas of environmental justice concern. Residents in these two areas of the city experience greater exposure to environmental pollution due to permitted facilities, interstates and highways, off-road mobile sources, and area sources of pollution. Residents in these communities are more likely to be Indigenous, Black or People of Color, earn one-quarter or one-third of the area median income, rent their homes, and have some of the highest asthma and childhood lead rate poisoning in the State.

The Northside Green Zone Task Force adopted the Northside Green Zone work plan in March 2020, with language highlighting the need for cumulative pollution analysis when issuing permits. The Southside Green Zone Council adopted the Southside Green Zone work plan in December 2019 and identified excessive overall air pollution with adverse health impact as a significant community concern.

The City of Minneapolis' 2021 Policy Positions supports robust environmental policies focused on improving air, water and soil quality, including:

- Efforts to increase the monitoring of air quality in the City of Minneapolis, investigation of the causes of negative human health and environmental impacts caused by poor air quality, and solutions to those impacts, especially focusing on environmental justice,
- Policies and funding aimed at enhancing health equity and preventing and reducing health disparities in Minnesota,
- Legislation that establishes, strengthens, or promotes protections in state law to ensure health, safety, and equity in a workplace environment.

We look forward to working with Representative Lee on these bills.



Kim Havey, AICP, LEED AP
He/Him/His
Sustainability Director

Minnesota House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee

February 14, 2021

Dear Committee members,

I am a 27-year White Bear Lake community member who has lived and raised a family within the Water Gremlin Estimated Area of Concern for TCE exposure.

One of the biggest disappointments in the MPCA and Water Gremlin situation is the lack of community communication and involvement in permitting businesses in my neighborhood. I assumed the MPCA would be able to manage permitting and permit compliance to guard my community's health and well-being, but with businesses having to be trusted to self-report if there are issues, and inconsistent communication, response, and oversight from the MPCA to Water Gremlin per the OLA report, that did not happen to an egregious degree. I support HF503 because it would ensure a public hearing every 5 years, giving the community the opportunity to ask questions and be part of the permit compliance process. If this legislation had been in place years ago, perhaps the TCE exposure would have been caught sooner.

People can be affected by pollution from various sources. In communication with MPCA re: Water Gremlin and levels of pollution in our neighborhood, the MPCA would explain the difference between expected pollution and unexpected pollution, which could be caused by Water Gremlin. When permits are considered, it is important the MPCA can discern other sources of pollution, which is why I also support HF168 to expand the geography to the entire Metropolitan Area where the MPCA is required to "(analyze) and (consider) the cumulative levels and effects of past and current environmental pollution from all sources on the environment and residents of the geographic area within which the facility's emissions are likely to be deposited" prior to permitting.

Thank you for your consideration.

Andrea West

White Bear Lake