



Testimony regarding House File 1076

Representative Hansen,

The Minnesota Mortgage Association has grave concerns over the proposal that allows counties to add \$25 per transaction on the recording or registration of a mortgage, and an additional \$25 on the recording or registration of a deed. We appreciate the importance of funding the soil and water conservation districts, but we do not understand why we would burden home buyers and sellers with another fee to do so.

You may be aware that Minnesota's home purchase closing costs are already one of the highest in the upper Midwest. The mortgage registration tax, the deed tax, the conservation fee, and county recording fees are a big part of why we are more expensive than other states in our area. According to a recent Insider article <https://www.businessinsider.com/personal-finance/average-closing-costs>. Minnesota ranks the highest in closing costs when compared to our four bordering neighbor states.

State	Average closing costs with taxes	Average closing costs without taxes
Minnesota	\$3,842.64	\$2,427.46
Wisconsin	\$3,221.17	\$2,456.08
North Dakota	\$2,381.24	\$2,381.24
South Dakota	\$2,276.02	\$2,023.50

The additional \$25 fee will only make it more expensive to buy a home in Minnesota and will hurt lower income homebuyers and the BIPOC community the most.

Please do not burden home buyers and home sellers with yet another real estate transaction fee.

Kind regards,

Sarah Johanns, President, MMA

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April 7th, 2021

Minnesota House of Representatives,
Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee

Xerces Society Testimony in Support of Select Items in HF 1076 DE2

Sarah Foltz Jordan, Senior Pollinator Conservation Specialist
Aimee Code, Pesticide Program Director
The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation supports the following items in the Environment Omnibus Bill HF 1076 DE2: local control of pollinator-harming pesticides; prohibition of neonicotinoids and chlorpyrifos on state lands; new Soil Health Cost-Share Program; and continued funding for Lawns to Legumes Program.

Article 5, Section 16 allows targeted local control over pesticide use beyond what state law allows. Since 1987, Minnesota statute has preempted local governments from passing a number of laws that would address the application, registration, handling, use, and disposal of pesticides. This bill reinstates a narrow decision making power to local governments to respond, if they wish, to potential risks posed by the use of pollinator-lethal pesticides in their own communities. Towns and cities face unique concerns from pesticide use, yet current state law preempts local governments from creating laws around pesticide use. When localities have their hands tied with preemption mandates, communities are prevented from solving regional pesticide issues that may not be applicable on a state-wide basis. Local control over pesticide decisions is already in place in many states. Currently a number of states allow full local control over pesticides: Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Nevada, Utah and Vermont.

This bill would provide cities with the choice to take targeted steps to protect pollinators and the environment in their own communities. Already some cities are interested in taking steps to protect our state bee, the rusty-patched bumble bee, as it is in severe decline rangewide, but is still hanging on in some areas of Minnesota, particularly in urban spaces. With the enactment of this bill, communities would have the ability to take strategic and well-defined steps to help support this imperiled species.

Article 5, Section 29 will prohibit use of neonicotinoids and chlorpyrifos insecticides on state wildlife management areas, state parks, state forests, aquatic management areas, scientific and natural areas.

Neonicotinoid insecticides are a priority concern for pollinators because they are long-lived, highly toxic and systemic. They are also very prevalent in our landscape, as they are applied to the vast majority of corn and soybean seed planted, including seed planted on wildlife food plots and leased crop land managed by the DNR. Protecting our state's biological diversity, integrity, and natural resources is a central goal of the DNR's mission. Pollinators are critical for supporting plant and animal populations in two important ways: 1) they pollinate ~85% of flowering plants, thus supporting herbivorous and omnivorous wildlife that feed on berries, seeds, leaves, and other plant tissue, and 2) they provide direct food for insect-feeding animals, and the higher trophic levels that consume those animals. In this way, pollinator-harming insecticides, such as neonicotinoids, can have cascading impacts on food chains. In addition, neonicotinoids pose *direct risk* to a wide variety of wildlife including aquatic invertebrates that feed fish; songbirds and gamebirds; and large game such as deer.

Chlorpyrifos is a highly toxic chemical with years of research demonstrating severe and irreversible harm to both human health and the environment. A 2016 assessment by EPA found no known safe level for human exposure. A Biological Evaluation completed by EPA in conjunction with federal wildlife agencies found that chlorpyrifos is likely to adversely affect 97% of all species listed under the Endangered Species Act. EPA was poised to ban all food uses of chlorpyrifos, but the last administration cancelled the proposal, in spite of recommendations by federal scientists, and years of research clearly demonstrating the serious problems caused by exposure to this chemical.

This new state legislation is not a big ask. Since these state lands have been set aside specifically for the conservation and enjoyment of Minnesota's biodiversity and natural resources, banning the use of pesticides that directly and indirectly threaten those resources is common sense.

Article 6, Section 6 establishes goals and incentives for farmers to improve soil health on agricultural lands. This bill is widely supported by Minnesota farmers, and helps provide the support needed to advance soil-friendly farming in our state.

Finally, we strongly support the funding allocations for the Lawns to Legumes program. As an advisor for the program, volunteer habitat coach, and technical support

staff for a demonstration grant in Carlton County, I can attest first hand to the difference this program is making for pollinators in communities across the state.

Thank you,

Sarah Foltz Jordan, Senior Pollinator Conservation Specialist, Xerces Society
Aimee Code, Pesticide Program Director, Xerces Society

Background on the Xerces Society

The Xerces Society is an international nonprofit organization that protects wildlife through the conservation of invertebrates and their habitat. We have offices throughout the United States, including in Minnesota. The Xerces Society is a global leader in pollinator conservation. With 24 technical and support staff working on pollinator conservation issues, Xerces has the largest pollinator conservation team worldwide. The Society's work is based on the latest science and is increasingly recognized as the standard for pollinator conservation by organizations such as the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the White House, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, members of the U.S. Congress, the organic and natural foods industry, and the sustainable agriculture community, including farmers and farm organizations from across the United States and abroad. Our work has led to 1.25 million acres of pollinator habitat restored on farms over the last decade, including 350,000 acres in the last year. Through our Bee City USA initiative, more than 200 city and campus communities are improving habitat for pollinators and spreading awareness about these essential animals. We have also conducted hundreds of workshops and short courses on native pollinators; over 21,000 people have learned how to conserve invertebrates through our outreach and education programs.



Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

April 8, 2021

TO: House Environment & Natural Resources Committee
FROM: Kara Josephson, Legislative Director, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy
RE: HF 1076 - House Environment & Natural Resources Omnibus Bill

Members of the Committee:

Thank you for your service to the people of Minnesota during this challenging time and thank you for the opportunity to testify on HF 1076, the House Environment and Natural Resources Omnibus Bill. Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA) is a nonprofit organization with almost 50 years of experience using law and science to protect Minnesota's environment and the health of its people.

We are glad to see that the House budget provides general fund revenue support to agencies and avoids the shifts to dedicated funds in the Senate's proposed budget (SF 959.) As this bill moves forward, MCEA hopes the House stands strong against shifts that violate the statutes that established funds like the Heritage Enhancement Account, that are meant to provide additional funding for habitat as opposed to being used to fill holes in the general fund budget for the MPCA and DNR.

We also support HF 1076 because it contains many important provisions that will help improve our state's air, water, and soil. By no means is this an exhaustive list of the sections we support, but we would like to state the sections which MCEA strongly supports.

Articles 2 and 3: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) Appropriations for Fiscal Years 2021 and 2022

While we generally believe that ENRTF bills ought to travel as standalone legislation, we strongly support Articles 2 and 3. They represent progress toward finally releasing ENRTF funds after nearly two years of gridlock. This would support hundreds of jobs and make important investments in scientific research and habitat protection and restoration across Minnesota. We applaud the authors of this bill for respecting the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources' process and following its recommendations.

Article 4, Sections 5, 9, 10, 30, 33, 34: Environmental Justice

We are glad to see the inclusion of several sections in Article 4 that address environmental justice and the impact on overburdened communities, particularly:

Section 5 - public hearings before settlements

Section 9 and 10 - defining environmental justice and environmental justice areas

Section 30 - addressing permitting in environmental justice areas

Section 33 - public hearings for non-expiring air permits

Section 34 - requiring MPCA to ensure that impact on environmental justice areas be addressed and consultation with environmental justice communities be conducted

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Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

We commend Chair Hansen and Reps. Lee and Wazlawik for their work on environmental justice in these sections. MCEA has testified in favor of several of these bills in this session and previous sessions and supports these efforts. We encourage continued consultation with the communities who are overburdened by pollution as this bill moves forward so that those most impacted by pollution are part of the process of defining environmental justice and advancing solutions to injustice through the legislative process.

In addition, we would like to call attention to other provisions in the bill which we support:

Article 5, Sections 81 & 82: Water Management

MCEA supports these provisions that would expand prohibitions on new Mt. Simon-Hinckley Aquifer water appropriations permits and prohibit the bulk transport or sale of water use permits more than 50 miles from the well.

Article 6 Section 5: Water Quality & Storage

We support the effort to fund plans for effective water quality and storage management. This plan improves drinking water for Minnesotans and helps with climate change mitigation as more rains overwhelm the current system. The plan also includes utilizing natural infrastructures like wetlands and previously drained lakes, which we support as good water storage and quality practice.

Article 6, Section 6 & 7: Soil-Healthy Farming

We support the establishment of a state-wide soil-healthy farming goal of at least 30 percent of Minnesota farmland utilizing cover crops, perennial crops, no-till or managed rotational grazing by 2030. This would have many positive benefits, including boosting farm income, building soil health, preventing or minimizing erosion and runoff, retaining and cleaning water, sequestering carbon, supporting pollinators, and increasing farm resiliency.

In the interest of brevity, we would add that there are many other important provisions that MCEA supports, and we urge the Committee members to support HF 1076. We appreciate the work that has gone into this bill that will protect and improve our state's air, water, and soil, and that will include and benefit all Minnesotans.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the House Environment and Natural Resources omnibus bill.

Sincerely,

Kara Josephson
Legislative Director, Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

Testimony of Deanna White to the House Environment Committee April 8, 2021

Good afternoon Chair Hansen and members of the committee,

My name is Deanna White, and I am the Minnesota State Director of Clean Water Action.

Clean Water Action and its more than 50,000 members across Minnesota are pleased to see so many important environmental provisions in HF1076. In particular, we would call your attention to the provisions that would prevent and manage contamination from toxic PFAS chemicals and would further protect Minnesota's water resources as well as those that take steps to better protect frontline communities, address pesticide use and invasive species.

It is critical that the legislature address PFAS chemicals and their usage in food packaging. Eliminating non-essential uses of PFAS such as its use in food packaging was identified as a key opportunity to prevent pollution in "Minnesota's PFAS Blueprint". We hope that the committee will agree that preventing and addressing PFAS pollution should be a top priority for the legislature.

Per and poly fluoroalkyl substances, known as PFAS, are a class of man-made chemicals used to create a grease- and water-resistant barrier on many types of products. The coatings on paper, cardboard, and molded fiber food packaging are an ongoing source of persistent PFAS; they can leach from packaging into food and then our bodies, and **do not break down** once they enter our waste stream.

While some will suggest that newer "short chain" PFAS are safer than the original "long chain" variety, there is growing evidence that these newly formulated PFAS have similar health concerns to the older formulations. According to scientific research, PFAS have been found in 97% of human blood samples¹. These chemicals are passed onto the womb; newborn babies are born with these industrial contaminants now². PFAS chemicals have been linked to kidney³ and testicular⁴ cancer, liver malfunction⁵, thyroid disease⁶, delayed puberty⁷, early menopause in women⁸, reduced immune response in children⁹, and elevated cholesterol¹⁰. A recent analysis of birth outcomes in Oakdale from 2002-2011 found average birth weight and gestational age were significantly lower before water filtration was added to remove PFAS from the municipal water supply¹¹.

1 – [Serum Biomarkers of Exposure to Perfluoroalkyl Substances in Relation to Serum Testosterone and Measures of Thyroid Function among Adults and Adolescents from NHANES 2011-12](#)

2 – [Characterization of Human Exposure Pathways to Perfluorinated Compounds – Comparing Exposure Estimates with Biomarkers of Exposure](#)

3 & 4 – [Perfluorooctanoic Acid Exposure and Cancer Outcomes in a Contaminated Community: A Geographic Analysis](#)

5 – [Serum Perfluorooctanoate \(PFOA\) and Perfluorooctane Sulfonate \(PFOS\) Concentrations and Liver Function Biomarkers in a Population with Elevated PFOA Exposure](#)

6 – [Thyroid Function and Perfluoroalkyl Acids in Children Living near a Chemical Plant](#)

7 – [Association of Perfluorooctanoic Acid \(PFOA\) and Perfluorooctane Sulfonate \(PFOS\) with age of puberty Among Children Living near a Chemical Plant](#)

8 – [Implications of Early Menopause in Women Exposed to Perfluorocarbons](#)

9 – [Serum Vaccine Antibody Concentrations in Children Exposed to Perfluorinated Compounds.](#)

10 – [Exposure to Polyfluoroalkyl Chemicals and Cholesterol, Body Weight, and Insulin Resistance in the General US Population](#)

11 – [Reducing exposure to high levels of perfluorinated compounds in drinking water improves reproductive outcomes: evidence from an intervention in Minnesota](#)



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Not only have PFAS been contaminating our bodies, they are highly persistent in our environment where they have gained notoriety as “forever chemicals” that will bind to soil and prove costly to remove from drinking water sources. There are **huge costs** associated with PFAS; if we do not address these chemicals before they enter our waste stream, we will pay significantly more in future health care costs and environmental remediation.

PFAS contamination is also especially challenging for those who receive our waste. Recent conversations with Minnesota composters indicate staggering costs of up to \$7,500 per day in increased operating costs due to PFAS contamination. One composting site, in Blue Earth County near Good Thunder, was forced to shut down due to inability to adequately reduce contamination in water leaving their facility. The presence of PFAS also presents enormous challenges to wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs), as PFAS received from upstream sources inevitably end up as “their problem”. We are pleased to see that HF1076 includes funding to identify and develop strategies for WWTPs to manage PFAS in addition to testing biosolids for PFAS before they are land-applied.

We appreciate the committee’s consideration of the broad range of environmental issues represented in this bill. In addition to PFAS, we particularly support the provisions that would address cumulative impacts of pollution and their affect on frontline communities, the provisions addressing invasive species and the proposals that address pesticides and protect pollinators.

In order to protect the health of Minnesotans and safeguard taxpayers from prohibitive future costs, we urge you to pass HF1076 today.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deanna White".

Deanna White

Minnesota State Director, Clean Water Action