

March 15, 2023



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

Re: HF2693 – Zero Waste Grant

Dear Chair Hansen and Members of the Committee,

We are submitting a letter of support for HF2693, the Zero Waste Grant Program, on behalf of a coalition of organizations committed to a zero waste future.

Amid historic supply chain disruptions, the intensifying climate crisis, and rampant plastic pollution, there has never been a more important time to invest in a circular economy for Minnesotans that prioritizes reduction and reuse. Investments in Zero Waste infrastructure are investments in a resilient statewide economy, a healthier environment, and stable supply chains for Minnesota manufacturers.

Our climate crisis is directly correlated with an economy that supports linear consumption over circularity. According to the EPA, 40% of our greenhouse gas emissions come from linear consumption – producing, transporting, using, and disposing a material good.ⁱ In 2017, more than 1.8 million tons of waste ended up in our state’s landfills, and more than 1.3 million tons went to the incinerator.ⁱⁱ Yet, with proactive legislative action, we can prevent this waste. According to the MPCA, nearly two-thirds of what is landfilled and burned in Minnesota could be reduced, reused, recycled, or composted with improved infrastructure.ⁱⁱⁱ

The systems of single use packaging and linear consumption and waste are well established, and it is critical that we support opportunities to invest in and build out the alternatives. This bill creates a grant program for small businesses, non-profits, and local governments to overcome start-up barriers and support their efforts to create reuse systems, reduce waste, and contribute to a circular economy. HF2693 will invest in:

- **Source Reduction & Reuse:** Funding will be prioritized to support projects focused on transitioning away from single-use to reuse systems and projects that aim to keep our valuable resources in the ground.
- **Electronic Source Reduction & Recycling:** Funding will support efforts to increase and expand electronics recycling and repair across the state.
- **Market Development:** Funding will support the development of robust local markets for reusables, compost, recyclables, and refurbished goods.
- **Recycling & Composting Infrastructure:** Funding will support projects that expand access to recycling and composting and projects that improve the processes.
- **Environmental Justice Areas & Rural Communities:** At least 60% of grant funds are required to be spent on projects impacting environmental justice areas, and at least 30% of grant funds are required to be invested in rural Minnesota communities.

The Zero Waste Grant program prioritizes reuse and reduction. This could look like something as impactful as helping a rural school district purchase dishwashers and reusable dishes to move away from single-use disposables, a central collection and washing station for refillable bottles for cottage industries or breweries in the area, or a community-scale composting program that reduces food waste and creates healthy soils for urban gardens. This grant program will help communities get over startup hurdles and set up sustainable systems specific to their situations.

This program is a critical step toward a more sustainable economy in Minnesota. We thank Representative Hollins for her leadership on this issue and ask for your support of HF2693. Please feel free to contact Lucy Mullany (lucym@eurekarecycling.org), Director of Policy and Advocacy at Eureka Recycling, with questions or for further information.

Sincerely,



Lynn Hoffman,
Co-President of Eureka Recycling
(612) 455-9110
lynnh@eurekarecycling.org

The following organizations are co-signers on this letter of support:

Clean Up the River Environment (CURE)
Clean Water Action
Climate Generation
Eureka Recycling
Fresh Energy
Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate
League of Women Voters Minnesota
Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy
Minnesota Environmental Justice Table
Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light (MIPL)
Sierra Club North Star Chapter
Resilient Cities and Communities

ⁱ <https://www.epa.gov/smm/resources-waste-and-climate-change>

ⁱⁱ [MPCA 2017 SCORE Report](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/air-water-land-climate/understanding-solid-waste>

100%

100% Campaign
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Saint Paul, MN 55114
www.100percentmn.org

March 14, 2023

Chair Hansen and Members of the Committee,

We are writing to express our support for Rep. Athena Hollins' House File 2693, a bill to establish a competitive Zero Waste program.

Transitioning toward zero-waste has multiple environmental, health, and economic benefits across the state. By preventing landfilling and waste incineration, these programs would protect our land and groundwater, keep our air clean from incinerated particulate matter, and create good-paying careers in waste management. Programs like these meet multiple bottom lines for Minnesotans.

Rep. Athena Hollins' bill, House File 2693, would create a competitive grant program for nonprofits and governments to pursue zero-waste projects. The bill would encourage solutions to some of our most pressing waste issues: electronics reuse and recycling, organics recycling, waste reduction market development, and consumer infrastructure and education. This is a smart down payment for programs that could make a tangible difference for families and communities across our state.

We all have a role to play in creating a cleaner, more equitable future in Minnesota. This bill would increase the number of Minnesotans who can participate, in a daily way, in making that future real.

Please support House File 2693.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Aurora Vautrin

Aurora Vautrin
Legislative Director
100% Campaign
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March 15, 2023

Rep. Rick Hansen, Chair
House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy
407 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: HF2693 (Hollins) Zero-waste grant program

Dear Chair Hansen and Committee Members:

The Minnesota Solid Waste Administrators Association (SWAA) is an organization of county and solid waste district professionals and affiliated waste specialists and is an affiliate of the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC), which represents all 87 Minnesota counties. SWAA advocates for policies and funding that improve and promote responsible waste management and reduce environmental impacts of solid waste.

Counties are charged with implementing the state's Waste Management Act and achieving waste reduction and recycling goals. Zero-waste means diverting materials from disposal and up the waste hierarchy. Achieving it will take a comprehensive approach that starts with what is produced, educates the public, and provides the infrastructure and programs necessary for proper management.

SWAA supports the goals of HF2693 to ensure recyclable, reusable, and organic materials are kept out of the waste stream. State funding for resources addressed in this proposal are components of a zero-waste effort. Currently, much of the cost for these programs are paid for by local governments. We need focused policy and intentional investments from all levels of government to support the work of local public and private sectors initiatives.

SWAA appreciates Rep. Hollins putting legislation forward that would seed more zero-waste efforts.

Sincerely,

Laine Sletta, Brown County
Solid Waste Administrators Association, President



4407 E Lake St, Minneapolis, MN 55406

Testimony presented before the Minnesota House of Representatives Committee on Environment and Natural Resources on March 15, 2023

Regarding: Testimony of Support of HF 2693

Thank you Chair Hansen, Vice-Chair Jordan and Members of the Committee for the opportunity to provide this testimony today.

Minnesota is at a crossroads. We currently have an issue with waste and how we dispose of that waste. Currently, Minnesota uses a mix of trash incineration and landfills to dispose of our waste. However, neither of these are the best way to handle our growing trash problem. Trash incineration in the state of Minnesota is highly pollutive and often puts the most at risk communities in harm's way. It is also an antiquated system, with most trash incinerators being built in the 1980's and 1990's. Landfills have progressed and current technology allows for better mitigation than trash incineration, but consumption is still outpacing our ability to sustain these methods of disposal.

If we are going to grow our ability to combat current issues around consumption, cities and counties need to support growing their zero waste strategies such as reuse, better implemented recycling initiatives, and composting programs. HF 2693 will allow cities and states the ability to financially back new programs that will tackle the problem with waste so that we don't have to sacrifice the health of their communities and our environment to dispose of the trash caused by our society's current issues with consumption.

The future of Minnesota relies on our ability to remedy our consumption problem, please support HF 2693.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Tee McClenty, Executive Director, MN350 Action
Noelle Cirisan, Political Manager, MN350 Action
Eva Garcia, Political Organizer, MN350 Action



Date: March 15, 2023

To: House Environment and Natural Resources Committee

From: Douglas Carnival, on behalf of the National Waste and Recycling Association

RE: HF 2693; Zero Waste Grant Program (Hollins)

On behalf of the National Wastes and Recycling (NWRA) the following comments are submitted on HF 2693 related to a new MPCA Zero Waste Grant Program:

Minnesota has successful recycling and organics collection programs that have been led in part by the commitment and investments of the private sector companies that collect, haul and process organics and recyclable material across the state.

HF2693 would create a new and redundant grant program administered by the MPCA. NWRA and its membership are generally supportive of grant programs focused on source reduction and market development. However, our members cannot support the distribution of public funds to limited types of solid waste companies, non-profits and local government for the creation of recycling and composting infrastructure that will likely compete with privately owned assets that are currently serving many communities.

State funds should only be allocated for infrastructure projects that are necessary to fill gaps in the existing system and should not be used to create publicly subsidized operations to compete with existing successful public-private partnerships. The bill would prevent the companies that have led the development of our current system from receiving any funds and would instead provide public funds to a select few direct competitors that operate as non-profits or small businesses.

Additionally, we are concerned that this legislation creates redundant and conflicting definitions of many terms already defined in state law. Would the new definitions of recycling, recycled, compost and composting be used over the current definitions? Why do we need new definitions? This legislation also creates a definition of "zero waste" that is impractical and goals that will be impossible to meet.

This legislation creates a process for reviewing grant applications that is redundant, the MPCA already has an established processes for reviewing grant applications. As part of this process all solid waste projects receiving any type of funding should be analyzed for impacts to public and private solid waste facilities as required by Minn. Stat. 115A.551, subd 6. Further, these facilities must meet MPCA Locational standards/criteria, operation standards in Minnesota Rules 7001 and 7035.

We encourage you to limit this grant funding to source reduction and market development projects and allow private public partnerships to continue leading the development of needed solid waste infrastructure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on a matter that is very important to the waste and recycling industry in Minnesota.

March 14, 2023

Representative Rick Hansen
Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee
407 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support for H.F. 2693

Dear Chair Hansen,

The Partnership on Waste and Energy is a Joint Powers Board formed by Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington counties to address waste management and energy issues. We support initiatives that keep products and materials in use for a more equitable circular economy.

We are writing today to support the goals of H.F. 2693, authored by Representative Hollins, to help the state shift towards a more circular economy. A circular economy designs waste and pollution out of products and keeps materials in use to continue serving the economy, instead of ending up in a disposal facility or landfill. We support programs and funding like what is proposed in H.F. 2693 to keep waste electronics, recyclable materials, reusable goods, and organic materials out of our trash and landfills.

Even with our robust recycling programs in place, more than \$50 million of potential value from recyclable materials is lost to the waste stream each year in our three counties alone. Grants available through this bill would encourage more robust markets for recyclables in the state.

The Partnership looks forward to working with the bill author to refine certain provisions in H.F. 2693 as it advances to enhance the impact of the grant program and assure language leads to effective policy on landfill diversion and zero waste efforts.

Recycling and reuse programs need investment. Counties, cities, and our community partners want to do more to get us closer to a circular economy. The grant program proposed in H.F. 2693 can be one of a variety of tools we need to meet growing waste challenges and achieve statutory recycling, waste diversion and climate protection goals. The Partnership thanks Rep. Hollins for introducing H.F. 2693 and the committee for considering how it can be one of the solutions needed for a zero-waste economy.

Sincerely,



Commissioner Debbie Goettel, Hennepin County
Chair, Partnership on Waste and Energy

cc: House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy committee members

PARTNERSHIP ON WASTE AND ENERGY
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