

April 29, 2024

Representative Fue Lee
Chair, House Capital Investment Committee
485 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Support for Community Tree Planting, MPCA CAP funding, H.F. 5220

Dear Chair Lee and Members of the House Capital Investment Committee,

The Partnership on Waste and Energy (Partnership) is a Joint Powers Board consisting of Hennepin, Ramsey, and Washington counties, formed to address waste management and energy issues. The Partnership seeks to end waste, promote renewable energy, and enhance the health and resiliency of the communities we serve while advancing equity and responding to the challenges of a changing climate.

The Partnership appreciates the opportunity to express support for provisions of H.F. 5220 that help counties and communities be more successful in addressing environmental challenges.

Tree removal and planting funding

The Partnership supports funding to the Department of Natural Resources and the Metropolitan Council for Community Tree Planting Grants to replace trees lost to forest pests, disease or storm damage and reinvigorate a climate-resilient shade tree canopy in our communities. The Partnership particularly appreciates the priority on removal and replacement of ash trees and the focus on resource-strapped communities, as emerald ash borer destroys community forests and urban canopy in a growing number of counties (50 and counting).

We encourage the committee to act favorably to address critical community forestry needs in our communities and create a legacy on our community landscape that will be appreciated by generations to come.

Capital Assistance Program (CAP) funding for solid waste infrastructure

The Partnership appreciates the recognition of solid waste challenges counties face and supports funding for solid waste management capital projects through Minnesota Pollution Control Agency CAP grants. Infrastructure development must keep pace with growing recycling and other waste management priorities. Local projects help meet statewide policy goals, and state investment is critical for their success. We call on the state to continue to build strong funding partnerships through other solid waste infrastructure opportunities, now and in future sessions.

Sincerely,



Commissioner Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County
Chair, Partnership on Waste and Energy