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January 10, 2021

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

Dear Chairman Hansen:

The private forestland owners who are members of the Minnesota Forestry Association (MFA) strongly support the funding included in House File 30 which will help address the infestation by the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). EAB is relentless and tens of millions of ash trees now stand in the path of this invasive species.

Communities across the state are dealing with the expensive of removing and replacing their community forests. Soon we will be seeing this infestation take hold in our Northern Black Ash Forests. The loss of ash trees in our river bottoms, Northern wetlands and our urban canopy will change entire ecosystems.

MFA supports the two initiatives in House File 30 which provide funding for communities to remove and replace ash trees in community forest (Section 2, subd. 6 Invasive Species, ¶ (b) and Section 2, subd. 20 Transfers, ¶ (b). paragraph 3).

We also support the funding for the University of Minnesota to conduct research to determine the impacts of EAB on our water, vegetation and wildlife and to determine what species would be best to replace our lost ash trees.

We have been a consistent voice for an expanded state role in helping to address the EAB infestation. We would be pleased to respond to any questions that you or Members of your Committee may have regarding the Minnesota Forestry Association or any of the positions that we take on matters before the State Legislature.

Sincerely,

Gina Hugo
Forest Resource Specialist
Minnesota Forestry Association

cc: Peter Strohmeier, Committee Administrator