

March 12th, 2020

To Whom it May Concern:

Itasca Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) is in support of S.F. No. 3229 and H.F. No. 3484. It is critical to the success of the development of a wood pellet plant in Minnesota and would have a significant impact on our forest products industry.

At IEDC, we are heavily engaged in the forest products sector and are very close to the great challenges they face. We have watched the steady decline of the paper industry trickle down through loggers, truckers and other wood product companies. This issue was exasperated by removing markets for woody biomass, a significant loss to sawmills and loggers alike.

Today, companies in our county and region are confronting this serious issue. They are actively seeking our help to support North Star Pellets in Minnesota. We believe that a **yes vote for S.F. No. 3229 and H.F. No. 3484** would not only bring new jobs to our region, but it would help to sustain existing jobs, the loss of which could have devastating impacts on the critical infrastructure of the forest products industry.

Itasca County lies in the heart of the Minnesota wood basket. We are surrounded by this wonderful natural resource that we love, respect and embrace. It is truly a treasure, one that is at great risk if we cannot continue to provide healthy, sustaining forest management - a service that can only be offered if we have access to strong and ready wood markets.

We appreciate your consideration of S.F. No. 3229 and H.F. No. 3484 and hope that you will support efforts to keep our region and the forest products industry an integral part of our economy for years to come.

Sincerely,



Tamara Lowney, President
Itasca Economic Development Corporation