

March 12, 2026

Representative Josh Heintzeman
Co-Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources Committee
2nd Floor Centennial Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support – H.F. 4017, Infectious Waste Management

Dear Co-Chair Heintzeman, Co-Chair Fischer and Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources 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 communities we serve while advancing equity and responding to the challenges of a changing climate.

The Infectious Waste Control Act (M.S.S. 116.75 – 116.82) requires specific handling of infectious and pathological wastes due to the significant and unique risk to public health these waste present. This material—which includes among other things human body parts, body fluids, blood-soaked material and other biological infectious agents—does not belong in the resource recovery facilities and landfills that handle our regular trash. As such, hospitals, medical facilities and other generators of this kind of waste must set up clear systems, starting at the point of generation, to keep this material separate from other waste materials, and use specialty disposal companies and facilities to ensure this material is carefully handled and ultimately rendered no longer infectious through incineration or other specialty processes before final disposal.

Despite the creation of these specialty systems decades ago, those who operate regular trash disposal facilities, such as landfills and resource recovery facilities, are increasingly finding this material showing up in loads of regular trash delivered by trash haulers. Current regulatory structures and fines are not adequate to reinforce proper management practices by generators of these wastes. This puts trash facility operators—those who are moving trash around on the tipping floors and through processing equipment—at a high risk for exposure to infectious material, not to mention the trauma of discovering human body parts and blood-soaked material where it should not be showing up. Trash facilities face inordinate financial and operational burdens in managing this unacceptable material safely and getting it to facilities that are licensed and equipped to properly handle this material.

The Partnership on Waste and Energy strongly supports legislative action to address this unnecessary hazard at our trash facilities. The Partnership greatly appreciates Rep. Johnson for recognizing the importance of this issue and authoring H.F. 4017. Thank you, Chair Heintzeman, for hearing this bill. We encourage the committee to pass this bill to protect public health and create a safer workplace for those who handle our everyday trash.

Sincerely,



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