



MINNESOTA FOREST INDUSTRIES

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March 7, 2023

Rep. Rick Hansen
407 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: HF2310 - Forestry Portion of Budget Bill

Dear Representative Hansen and House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee:

Minnesota Forest Industries, Inc. (MFI) is an association representing Minnesota's primary forest product companies. MFI and its member companies encourage conservation, proper forest management, and industry development that foster sound environmental stewardship, multiple use of timber lands, and sustainable, long-term timber supply. MFI members are part of a forest products industry which contributes \$16.8 billion to Minnesota's economy and provides nearly 68,000 jobs.

Thank you for including forestry funding provisions in House File 2310, which would address dire funding needs in the forestry sector. We are specifically appreciative for the inclusion of the following:

- **\$3 million to Reforestation** - Reforestation is a critical component of proper forest management and contributes to reducing atmospheric carbon. There is a dire need to fund a backlog of reforestation activities as well as future actions.
- **\$2 million to Forest Roads on State and County Lands** – Proper access systems are critical to safely transporting raw materials from the forest to the mills. Climate change is negatively impacting these access systems and creating a need for better year around access.
- **\$4.172 million to Private Forestland Assistance** – Private landowners require technical assistance and cost-share help to properly manage their forestlands to meet a variety of goals.
- **\$800,000 to Tree Seed Collection** – We need to increase the pace and scale of tree planting in Minnesota to increase carbon absorption goals, meet forest certification requirements and provide future fiber supply. Current seed collection processes will not meet the anticipated demand.

We ask that you approved these and other forestry-related portions of HF2310.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rick Horton
Executive Vice President
Minnesota Forest Industries

Cc: DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen

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Your Woodland, Your Legacy



Chair Hansen and Members of the Environmental and Natural Resources Committee

100 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard.

March 7, 2023

Chair Hansen and Committee Members:

Since 1876, the Minnesota Forestry Association (MFA) has been a leading advocate for private forestland owners to ensure sound forest stewardship. Privately-owned forestlands comprise 40% of Minnesota's forests. Well-managed forests, a complex endeavor, protect water quality and provide critical wildlife habitats. Private forests must also play a significant role in supplying the wood and wood fiber to the timber industry and in carbon sequestration planning and execution.

Given the essential role that the Department of Natural Resources plays in facilitating healthy woodlands on public and private land, we write in support of specific forestry provisions within their 2023 proposed budget. We urge lawmakers to fully fund these provisions.

The specific provisions we want to call attention to include:

Technical Assistance to Private Woodland Owners (page 92)

- Proposal: \$2.086 million each year in FY24 and FY25 and \$1.32 million annually thereafter.
- The need: Private woodlands comprise 45% of the state's forests. Owners often seek technical assistance. This funding will help ensure private woodlands are healthy, well-managed forests that provide clean air and water, carbon benefits, improved wildlife habitat and raw materials for the forest products economy. In particular, the Plot-Based Inventory (PBI) will help woodland owners and the Department create an accurate inventory of forest composition, age and health on private forest lands. The availability of PBI data is currently limited to public forest lands and needs expansion over private lands to capture their forests' unique characteristics. A robust and reliable PBI will further ensure sound forest management decisions are made.

Reforestation (page 57)

- Proposal: Annual reforestation investments of \$1.5 million for: (1) Establishing service contracts to prepare reforestation sites and plant

- seedlings or seed; (2) Tending tree seedlings by protecting seedlings from deer browse and improving tree growth and health through practices like removing competing vegetation, selective tree removal and pruning; (3) Planning and implementing reforestation projects including contract administration, managing materials and monitoring regeneration sites.
- The need: 10,000 acres of DNR-managed forest land are in need of reforestation each year. This is in addition to tending approximately 10,000 acres of previously planted tree seedlings each year to ensure long-term survival. Beyond harvested acres, the DNR also reforests and tends land damaged by insects, disease and wildfire, which is likely to increase due to climate change impacts over the next decade. There is a backlog and additional funding is sorely needed.

Tree Seed Collection (page 100)

- Proposal: \$400,000 annually for increased tree seed collection to support rapidly growing demand for tree planting on public and private lands.
- The need: As private and public entities work to mitigate climate change, expanded inventory of wild seed collection sites is needed. Increasing annual tree seed collection will help meet growing demand for tree seedlings from Minnesota State Forest Nursery and all reforestation efforts that rely upon those seedlings.

ReLeaf program (page 105)

- Proposal: The Minnesota ReLeaf Program funding at \$7.6 million annually. This includes \$6.6 million for grants to local units of government and non-profit organizations to conduct community forestry work on public land and residential property.
- The Need: These funds will help address urban and community reforestation needs created by emerald ash borer (EAB) and other tree pests and disease through tree removal, tree planting, development and implementation of community forest management plans and education and technical assistance to forestry professionals and homeowners. The local community grants will help 50 - 200 communities each year with tree inventory, planting, assessment, maintenance, improvement, treatment, protection and restoration, as well as promote responsible wood use to reduce wood waste throughout the state .

MFA would be pleased to provide any additional information that may be helpful while making budget decisions regarding the Department of Natural Resources and the role they play in maintaining healthy forests. For additional information, contact Sam Richie at srichie@fryberger.com or at (218) 301-9758.

Sincerely,

Brian Huberty
MFA President

Minnesota Forestry Association:
An organization of, by, and for private woodland owners and friends



100% Campaign
705 Raymond Ave. - Suite 100
Saint Paul, MN 55114
www.100percentmn.org

March 6, 2023

Chair Hansen and Members of the Committee,

We are writing to express our support for provisions in Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan's proposed budget for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

As Minnesota transitions to a more equitable and clean energy economy, our natural lands play a vital role both mitigating greenhouse gases and adapting to the climate impacts. The proposed budget makes much needed investments in forests, grasslands, wetlands, and peatlands, and the recreation programs that keep Minnesotans connected to our great outdoors.

Forestry: We applaud the administration for its investments in protecting and growing Minnesota's trees through state-managed, private, and community-based forests. Likewise, the proposed budget helps address the growing demand for tree seeds and seedling through a smart investment in seed collection. Please support these investments.

- Planting Tomorrow's Forests Today
 - \$1,500,000 / year ongoing
- Private Forest Landowner Technical Assistance, Cost-Share, & Inventory
 - \$2,086,000 / year in FY 2024-25; \$1,320,000 / year in FY 2026-27
- Minnesota ReLeaf Program
 - \$7,598,000 / year in FY 2024-25; \$402,000 / year in FY 2026-27.
- Accelerated Tree Seed Collection
 - \$400,000 / year ongoing

We ask the committee to also consider expanding these investments in areas like:

- \$5,000,000 in FY 2024-25 in the Forests for the Future Program
- \$3,000,000 in FY 2024 for forest stand improvement

Grasslands, Wetlands, and Peatlands: Minnesota's natural lands play an important role as carbon sinks, one of the most effective tools we have to put carbon pollution in reverse. These proposals would help protect these lands and grow these natural climate solutions.

- Enhancing Grasslands and Restoring Wetlands on WMAs for Carbon Capture and Resiliency
 - \$10,000,000 in FY 24
- Protect and Restore Carbon Storage in State-Administered Peatlands
 - \$998,000 in FY 2024 and \$568,000 in FY 2025

Recreation: Minnesotans love our great outdoors. And we're committed to stewarding them for the next generation. Investing \$1,000,000 / year in the No Child Left Inside program is a critical way to make sure all Minnesota's kids get outdoors, get active, and fall in love with our lakes, rivers, forests,

and prairies. This program's focus on people of color, Native Americans, people with disabilities, people in the LGBTQ community, and veterans makes it a vital program for all Minnesotans.

Please support (and expand on) the Walz-Flanagan administration's Department of Natural Resources budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Aurora Vautrin

Aurora Vautrin

Legislative Director

100% Campaign

705 Raymond Ave. - Suite 100

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Representative Rick Hansen
407 State Office Building
House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 7, 2023

Dear Chair Hansen and Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

As the Committee reviews the Governor's budget recommendations for the Department of Natural Resources, we write to share our support for proposed general fund investments in programs that will benefit people and nature across the state. We are particularly pleased to see these proposed appropriations:

- \$3,000,000 and \$1,500,000 each year for Planting Tomorrow's Forests Today (Reforestation)
- \$15,196,000 and \$402,000 each year for Enhancing Community Forests through MN ReLeaf
- \$4,172,000 and \$1,032,000 each year for Private Forest Landowner Technical Assistance, Cost Share and Inventory
- \$400,000 each year for Accelerated Tree Seed Collection
- \$3,000,000 and \$1,000,000 each year for Investing in Minnesota's Wildlife and Aquatic Management Areas
- \$10,000,000 for Enhancing Grasslands and Restoring Wetlands on Wildlife Management Areas for Carbon Capture and Resiliency
- \$1,566,000 for Protect and Restore Carbon Storage in State-Administered Peatlands

These programs provide multiple benefits that touch all Minnesotans' lives, including carbon sequestration, water quality improvements, water quantity benefits, resiliency including flood mitigation, air quality improvements, outdoor recreation opportunities, habitat and more.

As this committee considers investments that can address climate change and make Minnesota more resilient, we encourage you to include these investments among a suite of other natural climate solutions.

Thank you for your work on behalf of Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Pinkalla
Government Relations Director
The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota

Molly Jansen
Government Relations Specialist
The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota



Minnesota Timber Producers Association

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Rep. Rick Hansen
407 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

March 3, 2023

RE: HF2310 - Forestry Portion of Budget Bill

Dear Chair Hansen and House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee:

The Minnesota Timber Producers Association (MTPA) is a trade association representing loggers, truckers, sawmills, and allied businesses in our state. MTPA members are part of a \$16.8 billion per year forest products industry which provides livelihoods for more than 68,000 Minnesota families. Our members are directly impacted by decisions regarding forest management funding.

Thank you for addressing critical needs of Minnesota's forests by including these funding provisions in HF 2310:

- **\$3 million for Reforestation**
- **\$2 million for Forest Roads on State and County Lands**
- **\$4.172 million for Private Forestland Assistance**
- **\$800,000 for Tree Seed Collection**

These provisions will provide important funding for reforestation—which hasn't received funding in recent budgets; funding for roads and bridges to ensure safe and proper access to state forests (95% of the use of forest roads is by those enjoying the recreational opportunities in our state forests); and funding to assist Minnesotans with private forestland in accomplishing their management goals. Plus, included funding for seed collection will help keep pace with anticipated demand.

We ask that you support these and other forestry-related portions of HF2310.

Sincerely,

Ray Higgins
Executive Vice President

CC: DNR Commissioner Sarah Strommen