



May 12, 2022

Dear Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Conference Committee (S.F. 4062/H.F. 4492),

Dakota County is committed to policies and practices that support a healthy environment with quality natural areas. Our environmental mission includes protecting, preserving and enhancing the environment for the health, enjoyment and benefit of current and future generations.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on several provisions that will have significant impact on protecting public health and the environment and will affect how successful counties and communities can be in reaching challenging statutory goals on waste management.

DAKOTA COUNTY SUPPORTS:

- **SCORE Grants:** Dakota County supports proposed increases to funding (\$700,000) for recycling and waste reduction efforts through SCORE Grants to counties. In 2022, Dakota County received \$1,292,998 in SCORE funding. However, it budgeted more than \$2.7 million in county funds to address state-mandated solid waste programming. The additional funding would help counties implement and expand programs toward achieving state recycling goals and mandates. (*Senate Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 2(b)*)
- **Solid Waste Management Tax:** Dakota County supports legislation to redirect all Solid Waste Management Tax revenues that currently go to the General Fund into SCORE Grants. Adjusting the allocation of SWMT proceeds to phase out the General Fund contribution and redirecting those funds to the activities already identified in law (MN Stat. 115A.557) will help support important local solid waste programming such as household hazardous waste, recycling and organics.
- **Metropolitan Landfill Contingency Action Trust (MLCAT) Repayment:** Dakota County strongly supports transferring \$29.055 million from the General Fund to repay what was borrowed from the MLCAT account to balance the General Fund budget, plus interest and lost earnings. This provision helps provide what is urgently needed now and in the coming years to address costly care needs at metro area landfills and protect public health. (*House Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 3*)

County Board of Commissioners

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- **Waste Prevention, Recycling and Organics Management:** Dakota County supports provisions to keep waste out of landfills and help counties meet state waste reduction and recycling mandates.
 - Waste prevention and recycling grant and loan program one-time appropriations. (*House Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 2(e)*)
 - Zero-waste grant program one-time appropriations. (*House Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 2(w); House Art. 2, Sec. 51*)
 - Compostable products and packaging standards and labeling. (*House Art. 4, Sec. 7*)
 - Carpet stewardship program plan through stakeholder engagement. (*House Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 2(z); House Art. 2, Sec. 95*)

I also want to bring your attention to the county's request for \$4.7 million in funding to support the construction of a new library in the City of South St. Paul. A new library in South St. Paul provides an opportunity to showcase a municipal building designed to be exceptionally energy efficient. The library's planned design is so efficient that it would result in net zero greenhouse gas emissions. This would be the county's first facility of this kind and a great example of a successful state-local partnership that showcases the next generation of energy use in public buildings.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Environment and Natural Resources Omnibus bill provisions that support protection of the environment for the health, enjoyment and benefit of current and future generations.

Please contact Georg Fischer, Dakota County Environmental Resources director, for further information on the county's positions. (georg.fischer@co.dakota.mn.us; 952-891-7554)

Best regards,



Kathleen A. Gaylord, Chair
Dakota County Board of Commissioners