

April 20, 2020

The Honorable Rick Hansen  
Chair, House Environment & Natural Resources Finance Division  
Minnesota House of Representatives  
407 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Hansen,

I write in regard to House File 4498, the House Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund bill, which is scheduled for a hearing in the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division on April 21, 2020. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has one project recommended for funding in this bill on line 8.4, "Developing Strategies to Manage PFAS in Land-Applied Biosolids."

Thank you for the H4498A3 amendment to fully fund this project at \$1,404,000.

As the Commissioner of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), my job is to uphold our mission of protecting and improving the environment and human health. This responsibility means that even in a time of COVID-19, we must move forward on addressing the critical widespread presence of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in Minnesota.

PFAS, a family of thousands of chemicals used in many industries, do not degrade or break down over time. While there is growing information on PFAS, there is much yet to understand. This research would supply basic science on how PFAS accumulates in the food chain by studying land-applied biosolids. Currently, biosolids that result from wastewater processing are land-applied to agricultural fields as a soil amendment in 85 of our 87 counties. We know these biosolids contain PFAS, but we need to further investigate how PFAS move from land-applied biosolids into the environment, particularly into drinking water and food supplies, and to develop strategies to manage biosolids to prevent PFAS contamination. This study will produce key building blocks for this purpose.

At \$1,404,000, the full funding needed, this coordinated study will help municipal wastewater plants, landfills, and compost facilities protect human health and the environment by developing strategies to manage PFAS in land-applied biosolids. The reduced funding scenario of \$1,000,000 would not allow us to fully investigate if and how PFAS move through biosolids, and it would not allow us to provide as much technical assistance to wastewater treatment facilities related to potential PFAS treatment options.

Funded at \$1,404,000, this project will:

- Understand how PFAS moves out of land-applied wastes and into groundwater and feed crops
  - Collect baseline PFAS data at facilities statewide
  - Collect samples in sufficient numbers and at sufficient frequencies to fully understand rate at which PFAS move out of land-applied wastes into groundwater and crops
  - Collect samples at field sites where land application has occurred, including soil, groundwater, and surface water

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- Install wells, where necessary, to access and test groundwater
- Detect more types of PFAS compounds (325+ compared to 33)
- Provide necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure everyone collecting samples will be properly protected from potential COVID-19 infection
- Help facilities statewide manage PFAS through technology transfer
  - Analyze currently available PFAS removal and destruction methods (technical and cost analysis)
  - Share study results – no need for individualized and expensive PFAS management studies

Finding ways to manage and reduce PFAS in the environment will be critical to protecting the health of Minnesotans.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts on the bill. I look forward to our continued work together.

Sincerely,



Laura Bishop  
Commissioner

cc: Suzanne Sobotka, Policy Advisor to Governor Tim Walz  
Alexis Donath, Policy Advisory to Governor Tim Walz