

Minnesota Forestry Association

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Your Woodland, Your Legacy

Chair Hansen and Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee

100 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Boulevard.

March 22, 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.

We write in support of HF2831, which would establish an Emerald ash borer response grant program.

The Minnesota Forestry Association is grateful for Rep. Finke and your leadership as Chair in addressing the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) crisis. The grants funded by HF2831 will provide essential relief to local governments, joint power boards and nonprofit biomass corporations that are struggling to combat EAB. Specifically, this legislation is one necessary step toward addressing the rapidly growing amount of waste wood from infested ash trees.

Currently, it is prohibitively expensive to dispose of the waste wood and there are limited options available. Without this legislation, one of the few and perhaps most utilized options available – the District Energy facility – will cease this type of disposal-to-energy work at the end of this year. Counties from all across the state dispose of their waste wood at this facility, and many do not have other plans or options for safe disposal without it.

This is critical legislation that MFA strongly supports. We would also encourage the committee to simultaneously take a comprehensive approach to this crisis and consider including waste wood that is generated from any infestation similar to EAB.

MFA would be pleased to provide any additional information that may be helpful while the Committee considers HF2831, and more broadly, how to approach addressing the EAB crisis and fostering healthy forests. For additional information, contact Sam Richie at srichie@fryberger.com or at (218) 301-9758.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Brian Huberty'.

Brian Huberty
MFA President

March 21, 2023

Representative Rick Hansen
Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee
407 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: H.F. 2831 (Emerald Ash Borer response grant program)

Dear Chair Hansen,

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 Partnership thanks Representative Finke for introducing H.F. 2831. We strongly support its passage to maintain the capacity of District Energy's St. Paul Cogeneration facility to use wood waste as a biomass energy source, and to assist burdened communities with the cost of managing the surge of wood waste created by the emerald ash borer infestation in the state.

The state requires a range of solutions to respond to the emerald ash borer (EAB) infestation that is now identified in 38 Minnesota counties and continues to spread. Communities are removing and replacing ash trees to slow the spread of EAB as quickly as funding allows. Adequate capacity does not exist to properly manage the surge of waste wood created as counties, cities, private landowners and others battle EAB in the many years to come.

State support is needed now to allow St. Paul Cogeneration facility to continue to capture the energy value of wood waste, rather than losing this resource to open burn piles that threaten air quality and public health. It is a priority that we do not lose the capacity St. Paul Cogeneration offers at this time.

The Partnership stands ready to work with you, your committee members, state agencies, communities and the private sector to pursue the multitude of solutions needed to respond to EAB and manage the resulting wood waste. We encourage the committee to act favorably on H.F. 2831 and to take urgently necessary legislative action this session to provide additional critically needed solutions to manage this decades-long wood waste challenge brought about by EAB.

Sincerely,



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

cc: House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee members

PARTNERSHIP ON WASTE AND ENERGY
HENNEPIN | RAMSEY | WASHINGTON

100 Red Rock Road | Newport, MN 55055
info@recyclingandenergy.org | 651-768-6670



March 21, 2023

Dear Chair Hansen and Members of the Environment Committee:

Metro Cities, representing the shared interests of cities across the metropolitan area, appreciates the opportunity to comment on HF 2831 (Finke). Metro Cities supports this bill.

Urban forests are an essential local infrastructure component. Metro Cities supports funding for a state matching grant program to assist cities with building and increasing capacity for urban forest management, meeting the costs of preparing for, and responding to, catastrophic urban forest problems and preventing further loss and increasing canopy coverage. Specifically, direct grants to cities are desperately needed for the identification, removal, replacement, and treatment of trees related to management of emerald ash borer (EAB).

Metro Cities appreciates and supports the \$9 million appropriation included in the DE4 Amendment for grants to local governments responding or preparing to respond to emerald ash borer infestations.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mike Lund'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mike Lund
Government Relations Specialist
Metro Cities



May 22, 2023

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

The MN Shade Tree Advisory Committee (MNSTAC) and the Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association (MNLA) would like to provide our support for the HF2831, specifically the language associated with the intent of the DE4 amendment as it provides the much needed support and additional infrastructure necessary to assist communities, manage the wood debris and increase capacity for the management of their urban forests and the deluge of wood associated with the epidemic of the emerald ash borer (EAB) infestation.

While we appreciate the much need financial assistance, we would also like to suggest further additional language to support:

- Urban wood utilization including, but not limited to, the development of an urban wood utilization network similar to that found in other states, such as Wisconsin as a mean to shore up future capacity for highest and best use of woody debris; this request is for at least \$5 million to the MN DNR.
- Increased funding to include all municipalities and non-profit organizations to manage EAB as this is a statewide issue requiring a statewide response. Allowable expense should also include staff time in order to support the needed capacity increase municipalities will surely need to move past this crisis.
- Elimination of the matching grant requirement at least for the first five years to incentivize the expeditious management of our urban forests in order to create resilience against future pests and threats.

Thank you for your continued leadership and support on this issue. We are happy to address any questions or concerns.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cassie M. Larson".

Karen M. Zumach

Karen Zumach, President, MNSTAC

Cassie Larson, ED, MNLA

