



**RE: SF4062 Omnibus Environment, Natural Resources, and Tourism Bill**

May 9, 2022

To: Chair Ingebrigtsen, Chair Hansen, and Members of the Conference Committee on SF4062

On behalf of the members of Conservation Minnesota located in all of Minnesota's 87 counties, we write to share our strong support for provisions considered for inclusion in the final version of SF4062, the Omnibus Environment, Natural Resources, and Tourism Bill. As an organization, our mission is to protect the people and the places that Minnesotans love, and we're hopeful that you'll join us in this effort by passing a productive, common-sense bill to preserve our environment for current and future generations.

Despite obvious differences between Senate and House versions of the Omnibus, we believe that the Conference Committee has a long list of available provisions that can serve to safeguard our environment and the people who rely on it, while delivering substantial co-benefits for Minnesota's agricultural producers, trade workers, and local communities. We respectfully urge you to include the following provisions:

### **Carbon Sequestration**

#### ***Ash Tree Replacement Grants, School Tree Planting Grants, Conservation Tree Planting***

Tree planting represents a substantial opportunity to sequester carbon, restore habitat, reduce erosion and pollution, improve crop yields, and limit financial burdens for local governments' responses to ash borers.

#### ***Restoring Grasslands and Wetlands on WMAs for Carbon Capture***

Enhancing existing grasslands and wetlands on state land allows Minnesota to maximize natural carbon sequestration and wildlife habitat without additional land acquisition or restriction.

#### ***Peat Soil Goal***

Establishing state goals for peatland protection allows the State to prioritize high benefit-cost opportunities for carbon storage. Drained peatlands alone are responsible for ~5% of all anthropogenic emissions.

### **Community Health**

#### ***PFAS Prohibitions and Disclosure Requirements***

Consumers are currently provided with zero safeguards to disclose or prevent the inclusion of PFAS in products they buy and take home to their families. These forever chemicals are dangerous, especially for children and pregnant women, and are costly, burdening communities with treatment and remediation costs.

#### ***Lead and Cadmium Prohibition, Lead Service Line Replacement Grants***

There is no safe level of lead for children. Without protections, Minnesota families are left without recourse against lead exposure. Lead prohibition and lead service line replacement offer necessary source reduction. Beyond this bill, we urge you to support comprehensive capital investment in lead service line replacement.

#### ***Cumulative Impact Analysis***

Minnesota has a history of direct and disproportionate environmental impacts on marginalized communities. We must take responsibility and take action to consider these impacts and prevent future inequalities.



## **Waste Reduction**

### ***Additional SCORE Grants***

Local communities rely on SCORE grants to meet state recycling goals and support waste reduction, but state investment has lagged in recent decades. We urge you to support additional SCORE grants alongside efforts in the Omnibus Tax Bill to correct the diversion of solid waste management taxes away from SCORE.

### ***Compostable Product Labeling***

Misleading and/or false labeling of compostable products a primary source of contamination in the waste stream, costing local communities and limiting the effectiveness of composting. Improved labeling can help.

## **Sustainable Agricultural Communities**

### ***CRP State Incentive, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program***

The most effective conservation programs produce benefits for both the environment *and* landowners. Voluntary incentives allow for restoration and sequestration without creating burdens on producers.

### ***Soil Health Goals, Soil Health Cost-Share Program, and Healthy Soil Program***

Soil health goals and programs are a key tool for providing landowners with the assistance necessary to grow conservation practices that improve water quality, emissions reduction, and agricultural outcomes.

## **Other**

### ***Elk Reintroduction***

The Fond du Lac Band's proposal restores an important species in NE MN, bolstering cultural linkages, recreational opportunities, and ecological health in a target area with limited agricultural conflict.

### ***Ensuring WMA Access by Persons with Disabilities***

The Great Outdoors are foundational to Minnesota's culture. We have a responsibility to ensure that every resident has the opportunity to enjoy our environment through our shared public spaces.

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Due to strong public support for environmental action and a rare, but substantial budget surplus, we believe that the Conference Committee has the opportunity and the capacity to advance meaningful, cost-effective provisions that benefit our shared stewardship of our environment and our communities. We appreciate your consideration of these items, and we remain committed to supporting a strong, bipartisan Omnibus.

Please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions/ concerns.

Thank you for helping to protect the Minnesota we love.

Sincerely,

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