



# NORTHWEST

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

March 17, 2020

Mr. David Hengel  
Executive Director  
Greater Bemidji  
102 1<sup>st</sup> St. West, Suite 101  
Bemidji, MN 56601

To Whom It May Concern,

The Northwest Regional Development Commission (NWRDC) supports economic development initiatives throughout rural northern Minnesota and backs the passage of S.F. 3229 and H.F. 3484. The wood products industry has suffered terribly over the past decade with more than 140 closed plants and a shrinking of markets for wood and residual wood byproducts. The expected impact of these proposed bills on loggers, sawmills, and other wood companies around the State would be important in helping to reach growing markets in the Far East, especially China.

As with many types of agricultural and forest products processing, an incentive from the State is sometimes needed to give the project a boost towards sustainability. There is growing global demand for use in the renewable energy market as countries look to lower their carbon footprint and use more environmentally friendly products. Minnesota Forest Products industry have vast supplies of ash residues that can fill that use. More than \$17 million/year is expected from this project in direct export revenues, along with the creation of 45 direct jobs and almost \$15 million in wages. This is good for the Forest Products industry and good for Minnesota exports.

We hope you will give due consideration to this legislation. Thank you.

Sincerely,

  
Cam Panfulik  
Executive Director