



P.O. Box 6060
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

February 4, 2021

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

Representative Mike Sundin
Chair, House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee
417 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Minnesota Forestry Association (MFA)--State Response to the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)

Dear Chairman and Chairman Hansen Sundin:

The MFA is one of the oldest Conservation organizations in the State, providing education and advocacy for Minnesota private woodland owners since 1876.

We thank you for scheduling this Joint Committee Oversight Hearing to receive testimony about the current consequences and necessary responses to the EAB infestation.

As the State Agencies will explain, Minnesota has more ash trees than any other state, so we have more at stake.

MFA has repeatedly testified in favor of a three-part response strategy for Minnesota.

- Slow the spread of the infestation through an aggressive “remove and replace” management approach. This will require a significant state commitment of resources to support local management of community forests and our urban canopy.

- Support research on replacement species best suited to preserve our current, naturally occurring eco-systems. Particularly our Black Ash lowland forests in Northern Minnesota, the loss which poses a great risk to a wide region in our Northern Counties.
- Support the development of markets for ash material. We can't open burn or bury the volume of ash waste wood which is coming from our communities. We need alternative uses. Perhaps its building materials for wood-fuel products, but we will need to open new markets to put as much of this material to good use as possible. Otherwise, this volume will create a blight on our communities and our state.

Chair Hansen and Chair Sundin, thank you for the opportunity to share the MFA perspective on these forest management and environmental concerns. These matters deserve the urgent attention of the Legislature.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gina Hugo

Gina Hugo
Forest Resource Specialist
Minnesota Forestry Association
Gina.Hugo@co.sherburne.mn.us

cc: Nancy Conley, Committee Administrator, nancy.conley@house.mn
Peter Strohmeier, peter.strohmeier@house.mn