



Minnesota Forest Resources Council

April 12, 2021

TESTIMONY OF Pete Aube, Chair, Minnesota Forest Resources Council

RE: 2021 Capital Improvement Appropriations for Natural Resources:

- DNR State Forest Nursery Facilities
- DNR State Reforestation

The Minnesota Forest Resources Council—established in 1995 under the authorities of the Sustainable Forest Resources Act (89A) and consisting of sixteen stakeholder members representing economic, ecological and social values of Minnesota’s forest resources—is responsible for providing sustainable forest recommendations to the Minnesota Legislature.

Last fall, the Council published a report on *Climate Change and Minnesota’s Forest*, wherein we described the changing climate as a major threat to our environment and sustainable forest management. Two important recommendations emerged from that report: increasing the capacity of Minnesota’s tree nurseries and support for reforestation.

As recognized in our report, tree planting and reforestation are critically important strategies for increasing carbon sequestration and mitigating the future impacts of climate change. Tree planting and reforestation also are fundamentally essential for sustainable forest management, and a statutory requirement of the Department of Natural Resources under Minnesota statute (89.002). Capital investments in the state forestry nursery and in reforestation are a long-term economic investment in the future production of renewable wood products and many other forest resource values. Minnesota cannot afford to ignore or underfund its reforestation responsibilities.

The Minnesota State Forest Nursery, established in 1933, grows and supplies tree seedlings to the Department of Natural Resources, as well as other public and private forest land managers. Unfortunately, over time, the facilities at the State Nursery have become dated, of limited capacity, and subject to malfunction or need of repair. A capital investment in the nursery is critically needed for renovations, improvements and efficiency upgrades so as to enable the nursery to produce its statutory limit of 10 million tree seedlings per year.

Reforestation, whether it be through tree planting or natural regeneration, includes site preparation, purchasing seeds and seedlings, planting of trees or seed, and protection of newly established trees. While the actual costs of reforestation might vary slightly year to year due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances, a dependable annual budget of approximately \$3 million to \$5 million is important for planning and completing multi-year reforestation projects on state forests.

Representing:
Commercial Logging Contractors
Conservation Organizations
County Land Departments
Department of Natural Resources
Environmental Organizations
Forest Products Industry
Game Species Management
Indian Affairs Council
Labor Organizations
Nonindustrial Forest Landowners
Research and Higher Education
Resort and Tourism Industry
Secondary Wood Products
Manufacturers
USDA – Forest Service