



“To promote a zero-waste society that advocates for **reducing waste, sustainably reusing resources and less landfill use.**”

February 3, 2022

RE: HF XXX (LEE) Climate Justice Bill

Dear Chair Long and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Minnesota Resource Recovery Association (MRRA), I write in my capacity as a board member to thank you in advance for receiving this letter and I ask for future collaboration with MRRA to provide additional feedback on Rep. Lee’s Climate Justice bill, HF XXX. We very much appreciate your consideration of our viewpoints in this letter; however, we would have appreciated the opportunity to participate via livestream in your agenda of panelists during today’s “informational hearing” in the House Climate and Energy Finance and Policy committee. It is unfortunate we can’t answer any questions committee members may have during the hearing.

MRRA has 10 facilities across the state. Our facilities operate primarily in rural MN counties (Otter Tail, Polk, Pope, Douglas, Goodhue) as well as metro, in Olmsted, Washington, Ramsey, and Hennepin counties. I am an environmental engineer and executive director for the Prairie Lakes Municipal Solid Waste Authority. We are owned by 5 counties (Becker, Clay, Otter Tail, Todd and Wadena). We operate a 54,000 ton per year resource recovery facility in Perham, Minnesota.

MRRA is in favor of environmental justice for all the citizens of Minnesota. We believe in moving Minnesota towards zero landfilling and leaving a legacy of a better Minnesota for future generations. For this reason, we respectfully request involvement in developing climate justice bills to ensure that they are compatible with our shared environmental goals.

In the short term, our facilities are more expensive to operate than the nearest landfills. Long term they are cheaper due to lower environmental risks. Minnesota’s taxpayers have nearly \$1 Billion

in landfill clean-up costs. In accordance with MPCA guidelines our member counties choose resource recovery over landfilling because it ranks higher on the waste management hierarchy.

MRRA members fully embrace the waste management hierarchy. We are advancing multiple regional programs (of higher priority than resource recovery). These include waste reduction, waste re-use, recycling and composting as we work towards zero landfilling. If resource recovery is removed from our integrated programs, Minnesota will move backwards, not forwards in waste management. These waste management strategies are not our own. They are recommended by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and required by Minnesota state law. Global leaders in environmental solid waste management including Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Switzerland, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands have the same perspective.

Many of our facilities are built in the heart of some of the most successful destination locations in Minnesota. Our state-of-the-art air emissions controls ensure a safe and clean place for people to visit, vacation, work and live. **Often, people that are unfamiliar with facilities like ours, mistake steam for pollutants. This is frequently the case during winter months.** Perham, Alexandria, Fosston, Redwing, Rochester, and Mankato are envied by neighboring communities for the jobs and financial benefits created by our facilities. The local business reduces transport costs and harmful emissions caused by trucking waste to remote landfills, not in our backyards. We think globally and act locally.

Minnesotans continue to generate more waste. The waste is more toxic and less recyclable. Let us carefully build environmental justice into environmental permitting without hurting the solid waste programs that were built to protect all of our constituents. I hope I have represented the need for Waste-to-Energy in Minnesota. If I did, you now know we are the leaders of Minnesota's efforts to protect our environment. We thank you for your work to help Minnesota protect our climate by protecting Minnesota's investments in Waste-to-Energy.

Chris McConn (cell: 218.770.2810)

MRRA / (Prairie Lakes Municipal Solid Waste Authority)

CC:

Chair Rick Hansen

Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Members