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Minnesota House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee
Monday March 21, 2022
HF3913

Chair Sundin and Committee Members,

My name is Rick Horton, and I am the Executive Vice President of Minnesota Forest Industries – a trade organization representing the primary wood-consuming mills in Minnesota.

Minnesota's forests produce a huge overabundance of waste material that could be used to meet human demands for energy, transportation fuels or biochemicals. Residues from mills, logging by-products and wood damaged by insects, wildfire and windstorms generate millions of tons of biomass annually. One study suggested there was over 600,000 tons annually available within 75 miles of Grand Rapids alone. Utilizing those materials and transforming them into higher valued products would be good for the forest products industry, would create more jobs in rural Minnesota, and would provide an excellent tool for managing our forests to be healthier and more resilient to climate change.

The Minnesota Forest Resources Council, of which I am a member, recently released Resolution 2022-1 entitled, "Supporting Minnesota's Climate Change Goals Through Development of Sustainable Forest Products Markets" (which is in your Committee packets). In it the MFRC "...recommends support for new and expanded Minnesota markets for forest and mill residuals, and other types of sustainably harvested woody biomass...". Furthermore, the MFRC, through its Site-Level Forest Management Guidelines, has established guidelines for biomass harvesting that ensure that enough will be left on the landscape to enrich soils, prevent erosion and provide habitat for wildlife.

The AGRI BioIncentive Program provide the financial incentive for companies to invest in Minnesota and bring technologies into the state to sustain and expand markets for biomass. MFI encourages you to pass House File 3913 for the betterment of our forest health, our climate, and our rural economy.