



April 17, 2023

Members of the Minnesota House of Representatives

Re: HF 2310 House Omnibus Environment, Natural Resources, Climate, and Energy Finance and Policy Bill

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the Minnesota Environmental Partnership and the organizations signed below, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the House Omnibus Environment, Natural Resources, Climate, and Energy Finance and Policy Bill, HF 2310. We greatly appreciate the many good provisions and targeted investments made in this bill to protect our clean water, natural resources, and the health of all Minnesotans and help us mitigate and prepare for climate change. This will greatly accelerate our progress toward a just and sustainable future. We are pleased to see the overall increase in funding to protect and restore these important resources.

We would like to highlight some key provisions in this bill that our statewide coalition members believe are especially important in moving Minnesota forward by protecting our climate, environment and the health of our people.

First, this bill takes important steps to center people in our public institutions and environmental justice in policy solutions and appropriations.

- **Cumulative Impacts Analysis in Overburdened Communities:** Communities overburdened by pollution desperately need protection from new pollution sources. This bill would require the MPCA to take into account the cumulative impacts of pollution in environmental justice areas when granting permits. People in urban and rural areas are overburdened by pollution and this cumulative impact analysis should apply to all of Minnesota. Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 3, pg. 11
- **Re-establishing the MPCA Community Board** - that previously operated as the Citizens' Board - would restore transparency in agency decisions, create more opportunities for meaningful public engagement, and would put decision-making power back into the hands of regular Minnesotans. This board was the final decision-maker for the agency and oversaw permitting and environmental review for nearly 50 years before being repealed over the strenuous objections of Governor Dayton in 2015. Art. 3, Sec. 17, Subd. 1-12, pg. 145
- **PFAS Provisions and Harm Reduction:** PFAS also known as "forever chemicals" pollute our water and are a threat to public and environmental health. The costs of cleanup and doing nothing far outweigh the costs to implement a nonessential use ban. This language includes information disclosure for products containing PFAS, as well as prohibition of PFAS in firefighting foam. Art. 3, Sec. 35, Subd. 1, pg. 165 and Subd. 2, pg 168 & Art. 3, Sec. 39, Subd. 1, pg. 174

Second, this bill advances natural climate solutions that provide ecological and societal benefits.

- **Lowland conifer carbon reserve and restoration of carbon-sequestering peatlands:** This bill includes protection, restoration, and acquisition of important Minnesota ecosystems that mitigate climate change. Art. 1, Sec. 3, Subd. 4, pg. 33 & Art. 1, Sec. 3, Subd. 3, pg. 29

Third, this bill contains important waste reduction provisions, such as **zero-waste grants** to increase e-waste recycling and **Standards for food and beverage products and packaging labeling** to encourage composting.

Fourth, this bill champions and accelerates a just transition toward climate solutions.

- **Statewide Greenhouse gas emissions-reduction goal:** We are glad this bill aligns the state's economy-wide greenhouse gas emission reduction goals with IPCC targets. This is fundamental. Art. 14, Sec. 3, Sec. 216H.02, Subd. 1, pg. 385
- **Minnesota Climate Innovation Finance Authority** addresses existing inequities in financing access, promotes local jobs, and leverages historic federal and state funding to bolster climate solutions that benefit everybody. We would like to see this allocation increased to \$45,000,000. Art. 14, Sec. 2, Subd. 1, pg. 372
- **Minnesota State Competitiveness Fund:** This fund capitalizes upon the IJJA and IRA money made available through the federal government. We strongly urge the House and the Senate to come together on the Governor's \$113,750,000 budget line to fully fund this once in a generation climate program. Art. 3, Sec. 11, Subd. 3b, pg. 429
- **Prewetherization and Weatherization support** will reduce energy use in existing residential and commercial buildings, providing assistance especially to low-income people, and **heat pump rebates** will reduce demand for natural gas heating and are more efficient cooling systems.
- **Solar on Schools and Solar on Public Buildings:** These programs will expand public benefit from solar photovoltaic power generation and reduce costs.
- **Distribution Energy Resources System Upgrades:** Will address interconnection issues and ensure that the grid is ready to support further deployment of renewable energy and storage technologies.
- **EV Rebates and Grants for EV Infrastructure, Electric panel upgrade grants** provide critical steps for electrifying our economy and adding capacity for EV infrastructure.
- **Commercial Building Codes:** This bill provides a much-needed update to commercial energy codes that move toward achieving the 80 percent reduction in annual net energy consumption by 2036.
- **Modeling and monitoring greenhouse gas impacts and quantifying climate-related impacts from projects for environmental review.** Art. 1, Sec. 2, Subd. 2, pg. 6, Art 1, Sec 2, Subd. 7, pg. 19

We thank you for your leadership and for your consideration. Please proudly support this historic legislation to protect the people and resources of our great state.

Sincerely,



Steve Morse
Executive Director

Submitted on behalf of the organizations listed below.

Clean Water Action Minnesota

CURE (Clean Up the River Environment)

Izaak Walton League Minnesota Division

Izaak Walton League W. J. McCabe Chapter*

Environmental Justice Coordinating Council (EJCC)*

Eureka Recycling

Friends of the Boundary Waters

Friends of the Mississippi River

Land Stewardship Project

League of Women Voters Minnesota

Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light

Minnesota Trout Unlimited

Pollinator Friendly Alliance

Resilient Cities and Communities

Roots Return Heritage Farm LLC*

Upper Mississippi River Region of the League of Women Voters*

Vote Climate

**Denotes non-MEP member organization*