

April 14, 2026

Senator Foug Hawj  
Chair, Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee  
3231 Minnesota Senate Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**Re: S.F. 4214, Environment and Natural Resources Omnibus Bill**

Dear Chair Hawj and members of the Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee,

The Partnership on Waste and Energy (Partnership) is a Joint Powers Board consisting of Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington counties, formed to address waste management and energy issues. The Partnership seeks to end waste, promote renewable energy and enhance the health and resiliency of the communities we serve while advancing equity and responding to the challenges of a changing climate.

The Partnership appreciates the opportunity to express support for two provisions of the Delete Everything amendment to S.F. 4214 that will advance protection of public health and the environment and help counties, businesses and consumers be more successful at properly managing problematic wastes.

**Battery product stewardship**

Electronic waste and batteries must be kept out of mixed municipal solid waste. Waste facilities are seeing increases in fires due to growing numbers of lithium-ion batteries mistakenly placed in trash and recycling, and they are struggling to manage the associated liability issues. Current outdated laws leave financial and operational burdens on counties and taxpayers to properly recycle batteries. For example, Hennepin County alone spends an average of \$300,000 annually, contrary to the original purpose of statutes written to hold manufacturers responsible.

S.F. 4214 as amended will update the state's various battery laws to reduce the significant risks of fires in our facilities, increase recycling convenience for consumers, relieve financial burdens faced by counties and taxpayers and put responsibility for managing batteries on the industries producing them. The Partnership strongly supports this bill to improve the battery recycling system currently operating in Minnesota while also paving the way for discussions on the challenges of electronic waste and battery-containing products that are not covered in S.F. 4214.

**Management of infectious and pathological wastes**

The Partnership strongly supports legislative action to address an unnecessary hazard that is showing up with increasing frequency at resource recovery facilities and landfills trying to responsibly manage our state's trash: infectious and pathological wastes, including among other things human body parts, body fluids, blood-soaked material and other biological infectious agents. This material poses significant health risks to those who operate regular trash facilities. And facilities face inordinate financial and operational burdens in managing this unacceptable material safely and getting it to facilities that are licensed and equipped to properly handle this material.

PARTNERSHIP ON WASTE AND ENERGY  
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Current laws and regulations already make it illegal to dispose of this material with regular trash. However, hospitals, medical facilities and other generators of this kind of waste must see stronger incentives in state law to do the right thing, to keep this material separate from other waste materials and ensure it is carefully handled and ultimately rendered no longer infectious through specialty processes before final disposal.

As an initial step in addressing this important issue, the Partnership supports the provision in S.F. 2414 to conduct a study of this issue and provide findings and recommendations on legislative or policy changes.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Partnership's positions as the Committee develops an omnibus bill. We stand ready to work together on these and other important issues for the benefit of our communities and the state as the Environment and Natural Resources omnibus bill moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Debbie Goettel".

Commissioner Debbie Goettel, Hennepin County  
Chair, Partnership on Waste and Energy