



Office of the
County Board

May 11, 2015

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The Honorable Jim Carlson
Minnesota State Senate, District 51
Capitol Room 111
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Senator Carlson:

The long-term impact of closed landfills is something every county must deal with, but Dakota County faces a particular challenge. It is the only county in the seven-county metro area with active municipal solid waste landfills, and the two landfills we have are among the largest in the state. We also have numerous closed landfills that, although dormant, require constant maintenance and monitoring to ensure their contents do not pollute the surrounding area.

Some of the contaminants in these landfills do not break down over time, and thus will be a problem for decades to come. It is vital to the safety of future generations that there be dedicated, stable, funding streams to ensure that these harmful contaminants never pose a danger to people, livestock, or the environment.

In 1994, the Legislature created the Closed Landfill Program, recognizing closed landfills as a societal problem for which the best solution is a comprehensive program in which state and local interests work together. The Legislature renewed its commitment to this issue in 1999, creating the Closed Landfill Investment Fund (CLIF) to set aside and invest revenue from solid waste taxes for the long-term care of closed landfills.

The legislators knew that these sites would be a problem far into the future, and sought to ensure that future policymakers would have access to dependable funding streams to help safeguard the public. The legislators prohibited CLIF funds from being spent until 2020, stockpiling revenues to meet future needs. They trusted that future Legislatures would respect the purpose of and need for this dedicated funding stream.

However, we are disappointed to note that both the House and Senate environmental finance proposals disregard the need for this dedicated funding and transfer millions of dollars out of CLIF and into other funds. This could threaten the long-term security of the three Dakota County landfills currently in the Closed Landfill Program.

The House proposal also transfers over \$8 million from the Metropolitan Landfill Contingency Action Trust (MLCAT) account, another source of revenue set aside to protect the public from damaging landfill pollution. MLCAT funds are primarily directed to the maintenance of metro-area landfills that do not meet the requirements for CLIF. Three Dakota County landfills are eligible for these funds. For these landfills, MLCAT is an important funding source to ensure that these sites remain safe in the long term.



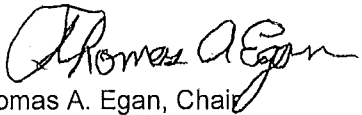
We strenuously object to all proposals to divert CLIF and MLCAT funds. CLIF and MLCAT were created to address a significant, far-reaching, long-term problem that these bills disregard. If CLIF and MLCAT are not adequately funded, there is a danger of the State not being able to fulfil its obligations to landfill maintenance, placing undue and unexpected burden on public and private entities. These entities may not have the resources to step in for the State, creating the danger that unmaintained landfills could pollute our environment and groundwater in the future.

Furthermore, funding for CLIF and MLCAT comes from solid waste tax revenues, revenues collected specifically to ensure responsible and ongoing solid waste management. It is improper for these funds to be directed away from their intended purpose.

CLIF and MLCAT funds are specifically dedicated to address an issue we know we will continue to face far into the future. Depleting the funds now could leave the State and local governments dangerously unprepared to safeguard our environment. We strongly urge you to oppose any attempts to divert solid waste tax revenue away from these important funds.

Thank you for considering our position. Please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely,



Thomas A. Egan, Chair
Dakota County Board of Commissioners



Nancy Schouweiler, Chair
Legislative Workgroup

cc: Dakota County Board of Commissioners
Brandt Richardson, County Manager
Matt Smith, Deputy County Manager
John Apitz, Messerli & Kramer