



Protecting, Maintaining and Improving the Health of All Minnesotans

March 7, 2024

Katrina Kessler, Commissioner
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
520 Lafayette Road
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Subject: Minnesota Department of Health's Support of the State Minnesota's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Single Entity Proposal for Climate-Smart Food Systems (Award Number EPA-R-OAR-CPRGI-23-07)

Dear Commissioner Kessler,

I write to affirm that the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) plans to partner with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and other state agencies involved in the proposal, to implement the suite of climate-smart food systems programs in your agency's CPRG single entity implementation grant proposal.

Our agencies have been actively collaborating in an all-of-government approach to climate action through the Climate Change Subcabinet, launched by Executive Order 19-37, and the development and implementation of Minnesota's Climate Action Framework, released in 2022. The Framework establishes a vision for climate action that will make Minnesota carbon-neutral, resilient, and equitable. These three co-equal pillars of Minnesota's Framework guide our collaborative climate work. We have built strong partnerships among our agencies and are well-positioned to support and collaborate with MPCA in the implementation of this CPRG grant proposal.

We are excited to have this proposal moving forward as a collaboration across state agencies because we all have a role to play in making Minnesota a national leader in climate-smart approaches to our food system. Our agencies coming together allows us to take a systems approach and capture multiple benefits while achieving significant greenhouse gas emissions reductions and carbon sequestration across all aspects of our food system. MDH has a successful history of overseeing the implementation of community-identified projects through the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) program, which is supported with an existing relationship and technical assistance structure between the MDH Office of Statewide Health Improvement Initiatives (OSHII) staff, Local Public Health (LPH) SHIP staff and Tribal SHIP staff. Current food systems efforts supported by SHIP demonstrate that many pieces are already in place to identify and implement GHG emission reduction activities within local and regional food systems.

MDH is excited to partner in this climate-smart food systems work because it aligns with our mission. Our mission is "Protecting, maintaining and improving the health of all Minnesotans" and our vision is "For health equity in Minnesota, where all communities are thriving, and all people have what they need to be healthy."

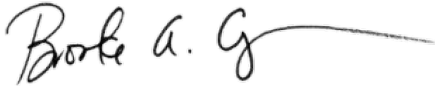
Our state agency can bring the perspective of communities, especially the voice of low-income and disadvantaged communities. The CPRG grant work can draw on the expertise of the MDH Health Equity

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Bureau which includes the MDH Tribal Liaison and the Office of American Indian Health, the Health Protection Bureau that includes Environmental Health as well as the Health Improvement Bureau which includes Health Equity Networks, OSHII, and SHIP. Community engagement is a fundamental practice of public health and the SHIP staff have been authentically engaging communities most impacted by health inequities. In addition, our SHIP evaluation team specializes in evaluating upstream prevention approaches and works closely with our SHIP partners to build capacity to use data to create high impact programs and interventions tailored to the community.

We are enthusiastic about partnering with the MPCA to advance our shared climate goals and the goals of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's ambitious and vital CPRG program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brooke A. G." followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Brooke Cunningham, MD, PhD
Commissioner
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St. Paul, MN 55164-0975