



March 11, 2024

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

Subject: Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy 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,

The Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy (R&E) Board supports the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) and other state agencies involved in the proposal to implement the suite of climate-smart food systems programs in your agency's single entity CPRG implementation grant proposal. We understand that there are several components to the proposal, including the funding of programs that improve public and environmental health and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by moving waste up the hierarchy, innovative food waste management and equitable access to food waste recycling.

R&E is excited to participate in this collaborative proposal and play a key role in making Minnesota a national leader in climate-smart approaches to our food system. Our organizations coming together allows for a systems approach to capturing multiple benefits while achieving significant GHG emissions reduction and carbon sequestration. R&E is currently rolling out our food scraps pickup program, which allows all residents in the two counties, regardless of city, hauler or housing type, to recycle food waste at no additional cost. Using robotic technology, special compostable bags are recovered from the trash, along with organic-rich materials from the waste stream. Our proposed project would use anaerobic digestion to produce renewable natural gas and biochar from food waste, diverting 70,000 tons of organics from landfills and incineration annually and harnessing public health and climate benefits.

R&E is partnering in climate-smart food systems work because it aligns with our mission. Our mission is ***"enhancing public health & the environment by creating value from waste through partnerships."*** We view waste as a resource and work to recover maximum value from discarded materials. R&E brings the perspective of over 30 years of waste reduction, landfill diversion and engagement of our diverse communities. We have a long history of collaborating with Ramsey and Washington counties, waste management services, solid waste technology providers and community partners.

We are involved with reducing industrial GHG emissions through our comprehensive work on reduction and management of solid waste and food waste, which includes public programming and waste processing operations. The food scraps pickup program, combined with anaerobic digestion and the production of biochar, creates an invaluable opportunity as a demonstration project that effectively reduces climate pollution through clean, carbon-negative energy and carbon sequestration from food waste. This program will benefit over 800,000 residents, including low-income and disadvantaged communities in our counties.

Ramsey and Washington counties and R&E work closely with the MPCA on many fronts to reduce waste and manage waste responsibly. The counties engage in annual reporting and strategic planning with MPCA as our oversight agency. We hold state-approved 20-year solid waste management plans in accordance with the MPCA metropolitan solid waste management policy plan. In 2020, R&E received \$7M in funding from the MPCA's Capital Assistance Program to successfully complete next-generation facility enhancements to recover the food scrap bags and organic-rich materials from municipal solid waste. This demonstrates the strong relationship we have and the ability to partner with the State in future programs.

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, appearing to read "Fran Miron", is positioned above the typed name.

Commissioner Fran Miron, Washington County
Chair, Ramsey/Washington Recycling & Energy Board