Testimony to the Senate Transportation Committee
March 4, 2024

I am Eric Schenck, executive director of the Minnesota Forest Resources Council. The Minnesota Forest Resources Council was legislatively established through the Sustainable Forest Resource Act (MFRC, MN Stat. 89A) to develop policy recommendations for the Governor and Minnesota State Legislature that promote sustainable management, use, and protection of the Minnesota's forest resources**.** This testimony is supported by MFRC resolution 2022-1 adopted by the Council on January 18, 2022.

In 2016, Washington state made national news when an Alaska Airlines commercial jet flew from Seattle to Washington, DC, using a jet-fuel blend containing 20 percent wood-based biofuel from Pacific Northwest forest residuals. This dramatic achievement demonstrates the potential for Minnesota to also lower greenhouse gas emissions in our state by supporting transportation policies that support wood-based biofuels.

The Minnesota Forest Resources Council urges the committee to 1) include "woody biomass" as an eligible biofuel feedstock within Minnesota's Clean Transportation Standard (CTS) policy and 2) support, through credit generation or other financial means, sustainable forest management practices that further lower life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions associated with woody biomass feedstocks. These inclusions help ensure that the CTS capitalizes on the environmental and economic benefits afforded by engagement of Minnesota's sustainable forestry sector.

These two recommendations directly support the Clean Transportation Standard (CTS) policy objective to reduce carbon emissions from Minnesota's transportation sector through a transition to low carbon-emitting fuels. Woody biomass as a biofuel source offers an advantage to this objective due to its low carbon intensity (CI) score. For example, diesel fuel refined from fossil fuel petroleum has a CI of 90, biodiesel made from soybeans has a CI of 58, while renewable diesel derived from woody biomass has a CI of 8. Therefore, transitioning to woody biomass biofuels offers a rapid pathway to reducing transportation sector emissions.

Minnesota has a sustainable supply of woody biomass that is vast, underutilized, and rapidly increasing on private, public, and urban forestlands.-This increase is partially attributed to rising tree mortality associated with climate influenced weather, invasive insects, and tree disease. The incorporation of woody biomass in CTS policy enables market development for this underutilized wood to deliver not yet realized economic benefits to communities while reducing transportation sector emissions. Moreover, CTS support and incentives for sustainable forest management practices can create new financial and management opportunities to adaptively manage Minnesota forests. This additional support of proactive measures to increase forest resilience amid climate changes can fortify Minnesota's already robust sustainable forest management framework**.

Today, innovative technologies are rapidly transforming woody biomass into an economically viable feedstock for renewable and low-carbon diesel, sustainable aviation fuel, and other biofuels. The inclusion of Minnesota's sustainable forestry sector in CTS policy will spur needed innovation and participation in emerging markets—both of which are important strategies to achieving the environmental, economic, and societal benefits of climate action sought by Minnesota's Climate Action Framework.

Thank you for considering this testimony. I am glad to answer any questions the Committee may have.

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*** Minnesota uses a sustainable forest management framework that includes climate change considerations in forest planning and management decisions. The Minnesota Forest Resources Council (MFRC) also is developing methodology to track carbon sequestration , carbon storage, and carbon emissions more accurately within the state's forestry sector.*