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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-THIRD SESSION

H. F. No. 2831

03/13/2023

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The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to agriculture; establishing an emerald ash borer response grant program;
1.3 appropriating money; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter
1.4 18G.

1.5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.6 Section 1. [18G.15] EMERALD ASH BORER RESPONSE.

1.7 Subdivision 1. Purpose. The legislature finds that an epidemic of an invasive plant pest,
1.8 the emerald ash borer, is occurring in Minnesota, threatening the natural environment, and
1.9 generating large volumes of wood waste from ash trees. Immediate action is therefore
1.10 necessary to provide funding to assist local units of government with destroying wood waste
1.11 containing the remains of ash trees infected with emerald ash borer or removed in response
1.12 to the emerald ash borer epidemic and preserving existing biomass energy infrastructure
1.13 that is critical to support local and regional emerald ash borer response programs.

1.14 Subd. 2. Establishment. The commissioner must establish a program to:

1.15 (1) provide state matching grants to assist communities with disposing of wood waste
1.16 containing the remains of ash trees removed in response to the emerald ash borer epidemic;
1.17 and

1.18 (2) identify and designate existing biomass energy facilities that are critical infrastructure
1.19 for local and regional emerald ash borer response programs.

1.20 Subd. 3. Eligible applicants. The commissioner may award grants under this section
1.21 to:

2.1 (1) local units of government, including cities, counties, regional authorities, joint powers
 2.2 boards, towns, and parks and recreation boards in cities of the first class that are responding
 2.3 or actively preparing to respond to an emerald ash borer infestation; and

2.4 (2) Minnesota nonprofit corporations that own a biomass-fueled combined heat and
 2.5 power plant serving a district heating system.

2.6 Subd. 4. **Eligible expenditures.** Local units of government are eligible for matching
 2.7 grants of up to ... percent of costs incurred to properly transport, process, and dispose of
 2.8 wood waste containing ash tree material, including storage yards, and costs associated with
 2.9 processing wood waste into usable biomass fuel and transporting it to designated biomass
 2.10 energy facilities. A Minnesota nonprofit corporation that owns a biomass-fueled combined
 2.11 heat and power plant serving a district heating system is eligible for grants of \$20 per ton
 2.12 of processed biomass fuel containing wood waste from ash trees processed in response to
 2.13 the emerald ash borer epidemic.

2.14 Sec. 2. **APPROPRIATION.**

2.15 \$..... in fiscal year 2024 is appropriated from the general fund to the commissioner of
 2.16 agriculture for purposes of section 18G.15. This is a onetime appropriation and is available
 2.17 until June 30, 2030. The commissioner may use up to ... percent of this appropriation to
 2.18 administer section 1. Of this amount:

2.19 (1) \$..... is for grants to local units of government responding or actively preparing to
 2.20 respond to an emerald ash borer infestation; and

2.21 (2) \$35,000,000 is for grants to Minnesota nonprofit corporations that own a
 2.22 biomass-fueled combined heat and power plant serving a district heating system.