



February 26, 2025

Representative Baker
Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee
Room G3, Minnesota Capitol

Dear Members of the House Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee:

On behalf of the ten producer members and dozens of vendor members of the Minnesota Bio-Fuels Association (MBA), I write in support of H.F. 8 to improve the environmental permitting process in Minnesota.

The ethanol industry in Minnesota helps support farmers, rural communities, and our state's economy through the production of low-carbon transportation fuel and animal feed from Minnesota-grown feedstocks. At the same time, renewable fuel processing facilities across the state are continuing to innovate with new technologies and production processes that will create additional opportunities for investment and job creation in rural communities, as well as for new uses of ethanol and co-products for Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF).

MBA members want to do even more to contribute to the state's economic and environmental goals, but lengthy delays in obtaining permits to build, expand, and operate their facilities have hampered these efforts. Section 6 of H.F. 8 would create an ombudsman for business permitting at the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to provide independent, external evaluations and investigations of permits that exceed the 150-day goal. The creation of such a position would be a positive step toward additional transparency and accountability in the permitting process at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

To be clear, we do not support loosening federal or state environmental standards. Creating an ombudsman for business permitting does not weaken environmental protection. In fact, transparency will promote permitting efficiency that achieves better environmental outcomes by allowing ethanol facilities to more quickly adopt the latest technologies that increase yield, lower carbon intensity scores, reduce particulate matter, and improve energy and electrical efficiency.

The members of MBA appreciate the Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee's consideration of this topic. We look forward to continuing to engage with lawmakers from both parties this session to achieve our collective goal of a stronger economy and healthier environment in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Brian Werner
Executive Director
Minnesota Bio-Fuels Association