



Minnesota Shade Tree Advisory Committee

Speaking Out for Community Forests for 40 Years

April, 2014

Dear Minnesota Policy Maker:


For nearly 40 years, the Minnesota Shade Tree Advisory Committee (MnSTAC) has played a leadership role as an advocate for the state's urban and community forests. Established in 1974 at the request of the Governor, MnSTAC remains committed to its mission – the advancement of Minnesota's commitment to the health, care, and future of our community forests. More than ever, however, Minnesota's urban and community forests are threatened. Too often we take trees for granted and it's too easy to cut even healthy trees down even though they have been providing important, irreplaceable benefits for hundreds of years. Too often trees are sacrificed for development or lost to storm damage, insects, or disease and never replaced. And even when trees are planted, they too often get short shrift when it comes to investing in proper planting technique to ensure they will become established and survive for more than a few years. As a result, our urban and community forests are in serious trouble and desperately need our help.

We are at an important crossroads, and your commitment and participation is needed more than ever at this critical time – a time when our forest resources are increasingly taken for granted and threatened more than ever in recent history. Although we understand there are many programs and initiatives competing for taxpayer dollars, we believe trees and the numerous environmental, economic, and social benefits they provide deserve to be a higher priority. The benefits provided by healthy trees include improved storm water management and water quality, enhanced energy conservation and energy savings, enhanced carbon sequestration and improved air quality, and improved human health and well-being. Without a doubt, trees are a critical investment in our future, but we are already paying the price for our lack of support and the absence of a bold, long-term vision for the future of our urban and community forests.

Please review the accompanying 2014 MnSTAC Report to the State of Minnesota – *The Benefits of Trees: A Call to Action*. The report focuses on the benefits of trees, current threats to trees in Minnesota, and ways to protect and improve our urban and community forests. We hope you will take our message to heart and consider the role you can play by making a commitment to protect and improve the current and future condition of Minnesota's urban and community forest resources. MnSTAC welcomes opportunities to work with state and community leaders in support of initiatives designed to protect and improve our urban and community forests for current and future generations. The trees we are not planting today won't be here 20, 30, or 100 years from now. You can make a difference; let's make the planting and care of trees a higher priority.

HELP US PROTECT AND IMPROVE MINNESOTA'S COMMUNITY FORESTS

Respectfully,


James B. Calkins, Ph.D.

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