Chairman Persell and members of the Committee. My name is Suraya Williams, and I am the Legal Fellow for MCEA.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.F. No. 3058. MCEA believes that this proposed bill will make the existing statute in place much stronger and more inclusive; it’s simply applying what is already there to a larger area.

The current cumulative levels and effect process under Minn. Stat. §116.07, subd. 4a will remain the same under this amendment. Also, the Pollution Control Agency is still able to issue, continue, and deny air emission permits. A provision in this statute states that PCA “may not issue a permit to a facility without analyzing and considering the cumulative levels and effects of past and current environmental pollution from all sources on the environment and residents of the geographic area within the facility’s emissions are likely to be deposited....” MCEA wants to highlight the importance of this provision because there are often several emitters within a given metropolitan county in Minnesota. A permitted facility may be in compliance with its permit standards and may still emit harmful substances in the air. If multiple permitted facilities are compliant and still able to emit to a certain extent, cumulatively, all of the facilities could produce a significant amount of pollution. This means that if a facility receives a permit without the consideration of cumulative levels and effects of the pollution it plans to emit in comparison with other emitters in the area, the problem is going to get worse.

It is essential to broaden the language to all 7 metropolitan counties in Minnesota. We need to make sure cumulative levels and effects of environment pollution are taken into consideration during the permitting process to minimize the environmental impacts in metropolitan communities that live near permitted facilities.
A child’s lungs do not care which facility the toxins are coming from. When a child lives in a neighborhood surrounded by dozens of facilities, it does not matter which one is the culprit. Collectively, all of these facilities are contributing to the problem. These impacts need to be considered across the board. MCEA trusts that H.F. 3058 is an opportunity to broaden the scope of the process and will protect more people.

Once again, thank you to Rep. Lee and this Committee for protecting our environment and for the opportunity to testify on behalf of MCEA.