

March 29, 2016

Senator Melisa Franzen
3403 Minnesota Senate Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Representative Hertaus
403 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: SF 2678/HF 3310 – “Sophia’s Law”

Dear Senator Franzen and Representative Hertaus:

We are writing to express our support for SF 2678/HF 3310, and thank you and the other co-authors for bringing forward this important health and safety prevention measure. As health care providers and first responders, we have firsthand knowledge of the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning and the devastation it can bring to families when an accident occurs. The tragic loss of 7-year old Sophia Baechler last October was a heart-breaking reminder that we have gaps in our system that need to be addressed as quickly as possible.

Based on research from the CDC, unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning claims over 430 lives, and generates more than 20,000 emergency room visits and over 4,000 hospitalizations annually. Exposure to carbon monoxide mimics flu symptoms and most often involves children under the age of 17 years. Given Minnesota’s rich tradition of enjoying our lakes and rivers on boats, it follows that we should take sensible precautions to make sure those environments are as safe as possible from known dangers like carbon monoxide. Sophia’s Law proposes common sense measures aimed at making boating safer for everyone by requiring marine grade carbon monoxide detectors in boats greater than 16 feet with enclosed spaces and requiring safety information.

Before boating season once again gets underway, we should move forward with implementing the sensible solutions outlined in SF 2678/ HF 3310. We believe “Sophia’s Law” will, if passed, help prevent future tragedies and urge you to pass this important piece of legislation. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Children’s Minnesota
Fairview Health Services
Gillette Children’s Specialty Healthcare
HealthEast Care System
Hennepin County Medical Center
Mayo Clinic
Minnesota Ambulance Association

Minnesota Chapter of the Academy of Emergency Physicians
Minnesota Hospital Association
Minnesota Medical Association
Minnesota Medical Group Management Association
Regions Hospital
Twin Cities Medical Society