

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Institute on the Environment

325 LES Bldg
1954 Buford Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108
612-626-9553

October 30, 2015

Re: Innovation Credit for AASHE STARS, for the Commons: Meeting & Art Space

Dear AASHE STARS program,

Please accept this letter of strongest support for an "Innovation Credit" within AASHE STARS for the Institute on the Environment (IonE) Commons: Meeting & Art Space. Since its inception in December of 2012, this unique space within IonE has brought new people, new ideas and vibrant artistic energy into the center of academic work on sustainability and environmental challenges within the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities. Now on the eleventh art exhibit at IonE, the Commons: Meeting & Art Space has provided new visions for sustainability to over one thousand students, faculty, staff and community members who participate in events in the space, who spend time working with partners in the space or who come to the Institute specifically for shows and for opening events.

The Commons Meeting & Art Space has led to new collaborations in music and climate change, which have been grant funded for further work, and to interdisciplinary courses involving artists and scientists. This space has led to IonE work being written up in new kinds of media, new visitors being brought into the space, and most importantly, it signals that the IonE and University of Minnesota are places open to creativity. The Commons Meeting & Art Space is innovation through art.

Sincerely,



Beth Mercer-Taylor
Sustainability Education Coordinator