

Dear Minnesota Senate:

We are writing in support of SF3561, the Packaging Waste and Cost Reduction Act. The bill has passed out of the Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee. We ask that you hear the bill in the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee so we can continue to work with stakeholders to strengthen the bill as it moves through the legislative process.

Problematic and unnecessary packaging is filling our landfills, burning in our incinerators, and trashing our recycling system. This packaging adds unnecessary costs to our communities and pollutes our environment. We cannot afford business as usual in our state. The Packaging Waste and Cost Reduction Act holds producers responsible for these impacts and drives them towards much needed changes. The bill takes the following key actions:

1. **Prioritizes Waste Reduction:** We cannot recycle and compost our way out of this packaging crisis, we must prioritize reduction. The bill requires producers to meet targets for source reduction, reuse, recycling and composting, and post-consumer recycled content. These targets are enforced by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.
2. **Drives Packaging Redesign:** Packaging producers will be charged based on the amount and type of packaging used. The less packaging a company uses, the less they will pay. There are also financial incentives for companies to reduce unnecessary packaging and use nontoxic, reusable, recyclable and compostable materials.
3. **Creates Equitable & Free Access to Recycling:** Recycling is a growing financial burden for local governments and individual families. The program will provide free recycling for all Minnesotans, by requiring producers to reimburse local governments for the cost of these programs.
4. **Supports Quality Jobs:** The program ensures that priority for service provider contracts is given to Minnesota companies that provide good jobs, strong safety standards, and quality services. Additionally Investments in reuse and recycling infrastructure will create new jobs across our state. The MPCA estimates that fully investing in recycling will result in over 15,000 new jobs.
5. **Strengthens Minnesota's Economy:** Businesses are struggling to source the metal, paper, plastic, and glass needed to make new packaging and products. Meanwhile, each year Minnesota buries and burns over 1 million tons of recyclables worth an estimated 143 million dollars. By recycling more, we can create a reliable domestic supply of recycled metal, paper, plastic, and glass to make new products. The recycled content requirements, provide stability to, traditionally unstable, commodity markets.

Packaging waste has increased while recycling in Minnesota has stagnated for over a decade. Our system is plagued by volatile commodity markets, increasing contamination rates due to unrecyclable packaging, limited local government resources, inequities in services, and a patchwork system of programs. The components listed above help to support a path to zero waste. However, efforts to weaken this bill risk us simply shifting the costs of recycling without ushering in systemic improvements and community benefits.

We ask that the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee hear SF3561, giving us the opportunity to continue to strengthen these components as it moves through the legislative process. Thank you.