



CONSERVATION
MINNESOTA

March 21, 2024

To Chair Klein and the members of the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee:

Conservation Minnesota urges your support for SF3561 (Morrison), the Packaging Waste and Cost Reduction Act. We believe this bill is a crucial step to solving Minnesota's waste problem by asking producers to pay their fair share to improve recycling and waste reduction efforts across the state. Continuing to burn and bury our trash is not a sustainable or viable option, and we must find a new solution to manage our growing waste stream.

Minnesota has reached a breaking point with our waste problem. We are producing far more trash than we can manage, and nearly 40% of this waste is plastic and paper packaging. With the continued rise of e-commerce and the delivery economy, this number is only going to increase. These materials pose many environmental and health risks to communities across the state, and our current system places the cost of getting rid of these harmful and wasteful products on residents and local governments, rather than on the producers who make the trash.

This has left counties overburdened with the cost of managing recycling and waste programs. The creation of a producer-funded, non-profit "Producer Responsibility Organization" (PRO) will help pay the costs of managing packaging waste, and counties will have more resources to run these programs and expand their services without increasing the tax burden on their residents. With this act, it will no longer be solely the consumer's job to steward these products, rather, the companies responsible for them will have to cover the costs of their end-market needs.

SF3561 puts us on a path to building a more sustainable and fair waste management system. As it stands, taxpayers and local governments are left with all the costs of disposing of this waste, including external damages to the environment and public health. This new system will make producers more accountable stakeholders in solving our waste problem and make them responsible for their fair share to keep Minnesota a clean and healthy place for everyone.

We respectfully ask that this committee support SF3561 to help reduce our reliance on single-use packaging and start tackling Minnesota's growing trash problem.

Sincerely,
Nels Paulsen, Policy Director
(608) 469-5299
nels@conservationminnesota.org

James Lehner, Policy Associate
(978) 844-4625
james@conservationminnesota.org