



CONSERVATION
MINNESOTA

February 22, 2024

To the Members of the Senate Environment, Climate and Legacy Committee:

Conservation Minnesota urges your support for SF3561 (Morrison), the Packaging Waste and Cost Reduction Act. We believe this bill is a critical piece of the puzzle in reducing our solid waste stream, increasing recycling, and meeting Minnesota's environmental goals.

Minnesota has a trash problem. Currently, more than half of our solid waste ends up buried in a landfill or burned at facilities like the Hennepin Energy Recovery Center (HERC). At the same time, statewide recycling rates have plateaued around 45%. This imbalance has exacerbated many harmful impacts on our climate and health, polluting the air, water and soil, and disproportionately affecting the communities immediately surrounding waste facilities.

The Packaging Waste and Cost Reduction Act will increase recycling rates and the use of recyclable materials by making producers responsible for designing less harmful and more sustainable product packaging. Requiring the use of more recyclable, reusable or compostable packaging will reduce our waste stream and our reliance on wasteful single-use plastics. This will divert a large portion of our waste out of landfills and incinerators, and put reusable materials back into the supply chain, creating a more sustainable circular system.

Through the creation of a non-profit Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO), management of this program will be funded by eco-modulated fees paid by producers based on how recyclable, reusable or compostable their products are. These funds will be used by the PRO to support counties in their recycling and waste programs, rather than relying on increased costs to the consumer or the state, which will also help increase recycling rates statewide.

If we are going to meet a zero-waste goal, we must make producers more responsible and accountable for the products and the packaging they sell. The burden cannot be left to the consumers, producers must be a part of the solution to our waste problem. 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,
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