



## MINNESOTA IS LEADING

Minnesota has a robust recycling infrastructure and one of the highest recycling rates in the country. According to “The 50 States of Recycling” report released in December of 2023, Minnesota has one of the highest recycling rates in the country for packaging materials including cardboard, boxboard, paper packaging, plastic films, and flexible plastic packaging. Beyond capturing a large portion of materials, Minnesota’s curbside recycling stream is one of the cleanest in the country, with a contamination rate of only 10-12% versus an average of 25% nationally.

As companies that have invested significantly in collecting packaging products and facilities to process them, we are concerned about completely overhauling the entire system through the Packaging Waste and Cost Reduction Act (S.F. 3561/H.F. 3577) as introduced, which creates a large new bureaucracy with unknown costs to manage only a portion of Minnesota’s waste stream.

### **BEFORE ACTING ON S.F. 3561: CONDUCT A NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

Before the Legislature turns over the keys to a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) as proposed in the introduced bill, Minnesota should legislate only a comprehensive solid waste needs assessment to determine:

- 1) where there are gaps in the recycling system, and
- 2) how to encourage recycling, reuse, and reduction strategies in the most efficient way that builds on our state’s current infrastructure.

Once the needs assessment has been completed, a more thoughtful determination about whether an extended producer responsibility (EPR) approach to recycling should be made.

The needs assessment language in the bill is for figuring out how to operate EPR not to determine whether an EPR system should be established in the first place.

### **BUILD ON EXISTING RESOURCES AND MARKETS**

If the needs assessment demonstrates that an EPR program is necessary, it should:

- 1) Supplement, not supplant, Minnesota’s existing recycling infrastructure, including material recovery facilities (MRFs), transfer stations, and other assets.
- 2) Ensure existing contractual relationships between recycling companies and their customers are not disrupted.

#### **The current bill:**

- does not protect the millions of dollars of investments in recycling infrastructure by the state through the CAP program and by private companies is protected.
- allows the PRO to engage in anti-competitive behavior and disrupt existing waste and recycling contracts, stifling competition in the marketplace.

Please do NOT empower the PRO to dictate how Minnesota’s recycling companies collect and process materials for their customers.

**NWRA MN supports the goals of reducing waste through recycling, reuse, and reduction – but S.F. 3561 in its current form is not the path to get us there.**

