

Minnesota Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee
February 22, 2024

Senate File 3561 – *“Packaging Waste and Cost Reduction Act”*

Thank you Chair Hwaj and members of the Committee, for the record, my name is Dylan de Thomas, and I represent The Recycling Partnership. I am testifying in support of Senate File 3561, especially when paired with the bottle bill legislation.

I lead state policy work for The Recycling Partnership, a national nonprofit that collaborates with communities, policymakers and more than 80 companies to invest in and strengthen public recycling programs across the country.

We work with those companies – big brands and manufacturers of packaging materials of all types, glass, aluminum, plastic, and paper products – to “insist and assist” them to uphold their sustainability goals to serve people and the planet.

These goals include minimum recycled content levels, package recyclability goals and climate goals. The circular economy cannot be achieved by recycling alone, but it can’t be done *without* recycling.

We also know that systemic change cannot happen without smart, well-designed policy. We have identified that well-designed Extended Producer Responsibility policy that strengthens quality recycling is a critical ingredient to achieving a circular economy in Minnesota and beyond.

Our robust research clearly shows that EPR policies such as those included in this bill can deliver huge gains in recycling rates by bringing nearly universal access to recycling and supported by robust recycling education. Our modeling for Minnesota shows that we could see recycling rates of over 65% – returning hundreds of thousands of tons of recyclable materials to market, reinjecting over \$20 million in lost material value into the economy annually, creating hundreds of jobs across the state, and rescuing those materials from being buried in a landfill or burned in an incinerator.

Some have mistakenly argued that EPR will increase costs for consumers. Various analyses have hypothesized about these impacts. We have looked in every major market around the world where producer responsibility has been implemented and we have not found any credible evidence that compliance fees have affected consumer prices. Let me repeat that: With thoughtful, well-designed, strong EPR programs globally – outcomes show no credible evidence of a link between fees and how much consumers pay for products.

EPR is an opportunity to make sure that we enjoy the critically needed environmental benefits of unlocking the circular economy, but a business opportunity across the state, as well.

This solid bill, which was the result of a multi-year, broad and robust stakeholder engagement process, should be moved forward, where we hope to see it continue to address outstanding concerns and improve.

The Recycling Partnership stands ready to support an effective policy and implementation of a successful EPR program.

Thank you for including us in today's hearing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dylan de Thomas', with a stylized, flowing script.

Dylan de Thomas
VP of Public Policy & Government Affairs
The Recycling Partnership