



February 22, 2024

Senator Founj Hawj, Chair
Senator Jennifer McEwen, Vice Chair
Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee
Minnesota State Legislature
1150 Minnesota Senate Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support for SF 3561 – Packaging Waste and Cost Reduction Act in Minnesota

Dear Chair Hawj, Vice-Chair McEwen, and Members of the Committee:

World Wildlife Fund (WWF) submits the following comments in **support of advancing SF 3561 – Packaging Waste and Cost Reduction Act**, which would establish an Extended Producer Responsibility policy for packaging in Minnesota. We thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments. As the world's leading global conservation organization, WWF works in 100 countries and at every level, collaborating with people around the world to develop and deliver innovative solutions that protect communities, wildlife, and the places in which they live. WWF works to help local communities conserve the natural resources they depend upon, transform markets and policies toward sustainability, and protect and restore species and their habitats. Our efforts ensure that the value of nature is reflected in policymaking from the local levels to the global stage. WWF connects cutting-edge conservation science with the collective power of our partners in the field, more than 1.3 million supporters in the United States and 5 million globally, and our partnerships with communities, companies, and governments.

At WWF, we believe in a future where there is no plastic in nature. Plastic pollution is a growing problem that impacts communities across the US and around the globe. Plastic can also be a valuable material – it protects our food, our homes, and even our bodies. However, plastic is often misused and mismanaged, leading to high rates of landfilling and leakage into nature. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) has the potential to reimagine the way we produce and use packaging, especially plastic packaging and products, so that we continue to use, reuse, and recycle our materials to their fullest potential. As an international conservation organization, WWF has seen how the implementation of effective EPR policies has benefited states and countries around the world by providing infrastructure, economic incentives, and accessibility for consumers with the goal of achieving circularity. In a global context, EPR is a policy framework that can effectively and cost-efficiently address waste that is currently negatively impacting nature and our communities, which is why we advocate for the establishment of EPR at the state, federal, and international levels.

EPR legislation will hold producers of packaging financially responsible for their recycling and reuse, incentivize a reduction in the amount of materials used, ensure that the recycling system receives the funding and investment it needs, and prevent plastic from leaking in-to nature. By advancing SF 3561, Minnesota would be setting an example for a whole-of-society approach to address plastic pollution and transform the way we use, reuse, and recycle materials. Effective EPR policies can lead to the creation of new jobs, reduce consumers' cost burden of waste management, and save funds for local governments in the state. WWF believes that an Extended Producer Responsibility policy for packaging will be significantly beneficial to Minnesotan consumers and businesses alike, by establishing a system that promotes sustainable packaging and best practices for it while also increasing recycling and reuse infrastructure across the state.

WWF is supportive of passing EPR legislation in Minnesota that ties business practices with better environmental outcomes, giving the producers of packaging a stake in the performance of the system. EPR provides an incentive for the state and producers to improve upon waste management and recycling systems. WWF has established principles on Extended Producer Responsibility that guide our thoughts on SF 3561.

Based on these principles, we believe that a strong EPR model is one that:

1. Generates strong environmental, social, and economic outcomes
2. Provides a convenient service to consumers
3. Creates a financially sustainable model for recycling
4. Offers producers access to recovered material for closed loop recycling
5. Supports environmental justice objectives in recycling systems

World Wildlife Fund believes in a future where there is no plastic in nature, and to realize this, we must bring the private sector, government, and the public together to achieve this common goal for a healthy and sustainable reality for generations to come. For more information on WWF's positioning on policies to advance a circular economy, [please see our policy guidance](#). WWF supports efforts to enact strong and effective EPR legislation in Minnesota. **We encourage you to advance SF 3561 the Packaging Waste and Cost Reduction Act, to be favorably reported out of the Committee.**

Please feel free to contact me at will.gartshore@wwfus.org if you have any questions about WWF's positioning on this matter.

Thank you,



Will Gartshore
Senior Director of Policy and Government Affairs
World Wildlife Fund