

March 4, 2024



Minnesota Senate
Environment, Climate and Legacy Committee

Re: Electronic Waste (SF3940)

Dear Chair Hawj and Members of the Committee,

Eureka Recycling is committed to improving recycling and reducing waste in Minnesota. SF3940 is a key policy in helping us do this.

We are a non-profit, social enterprise, recycler here in the Twin Cities. We work to demonstrate that recycling can and should be done in ways that benefit our environment, communities, and the regional economy. Unfortunately, electronics placed in the recycling cart are increasingly impacting the health and safety of our workers and increasing the cost of doing business.

Over the past four years, we have experienced, on average, 17 fires a year in our Material Recovery Facility (MRF) or inside one of our recycling trucks. These fires are due to batteries in electronics that have been disposed of in residential recycling carts. As we've seen at recycling facilities around the country, these fires can very quickly spread to incredibly flammable plastic and paper streams. These fires and the toxic smoke associated with them are dangerous to our team members' health.

In addition to the danger of fires and exposure to toxic e-waste on our team members, there is a significant hard cost of e-waste on the recycling system. These costs include:

- **Insurance Costs:** We have seen a significant increase in the cost of insurance. Battery fires are preventing many recyclers, like us, from even securing insurance.
- **Disposal Costs:** Additionally, we dispose of, on average, 28 tons of e-waste each year costing us \$20,000 annually.
- **Equipment Costs:** While the impact on our equipment is difficult to measure, electronics in our stream increases the general wear and tear as fires weaken equipment due to exposure to heat.
- **Feedstock Costs:** Lastly, each fire burns up some of our recyclable material that we are unable to quantify (it isn't a huge amount but once it is up in smoke it is difficult to tell how much was lost).

The amount of e-waste is only expected to increase. We need a comprehensive approach to the problem that ensures all Minnesotans can easily and properly dispose of electronics. Inaction on e-waste will result in continued challenges for Minnesota's recycling industries and continued harm to human and environmental health. It is time the state took action to address the improper disposal of e-waste by passing SF3940.

We welcome you and your staff out to tour Eureka's MRF and see our team in action. We are happy to provide additional information on this issue and appreciate your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lucy Mullany", written in a cursive style.

Lucy Mullany
Director of Policy & Advocacy, Eureka Recycling
lucym@eurekarecycling.org
www.eurekarecycling.org