

April 8, 2024



Minnesota Senate
Environment, Climate and Legacy Committee

Re: Food Waste Diversion (SF4944 - Senator Gustafson)

Dear Chair Hawj and Members of the Committee,

Eureka Recycling is a non-profit, social enterprise, recycler here in the Twin Cities with a mission to demonstrate that recycling can and should be done in ways that benefit our environment, communities, and the regional economy. We are committed to advancing zero waste solutions in Minnesota. Keeping organics out of the trash is a key strategy and SF4944 can help us get there.

We are proud to have piloted commercial organics collection in the Twin Cities, partnering with local restaurants to demonstrate that composting collection offers opportunity for big environmental benefit and costs savings at the same time. Through this pilot program, we provided education on organics composting and collected organics from over 50 restaurants and grocery stores. Given the amount of food waste coming out of these businesses, owners were eager to participate in an easy climate solution. Through our collections pilot, we cut the amount of their trash in half.

SF4944 will help Minnesota reduce food waste - addressing growing problems in the state, including:

- **Food Insecurity and Racial Disparities:** In 2021, [1 in 15 of Minnesotans](#) was food insecure. The rates of food insecurity were significantly higher for BIPOC residents: 25% of Black Minnesotans and 17% of Hispanic Minnesotans were food insecure in 2021. A third of all Minnesotans that are hungry are children. However, [according to the MPCA](#), about 62% of the food that we throw out could have been eaten or donated. This bill creates a pathway for food that would can be saved to be donated to Minnesotans that need it rather than tossed.
- **Climate Change:** Food waste contributes significantly to methane emissions, primarily through the decomposition of organic waste in landfills. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas, with a global warming potential more than 25 times greater than that of carbon dioxide over a 100-year period. By reducing food waste and diverting food waste from the trash, we can help mitigate climate change.

Finally, as a state, we need equitable access to organics programs to meet our goals. The combined recycling and composting rate in the state has remained stagnant over the last decade - at around 45%. This is far less than the state's goal of achieving a 75% recycling and composting rate by 2030. If we are to meet this goal, we need to reduce our food waste, expand organics collection, and support community composting.

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", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lucy Mullany
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