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April 8, 2024

Senator Foug Hawj, Chair
Senator Jennifer A. McEwen, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Environment, Climate, and Legacy
Room 1150 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Ave. W.
Saint Paul, MN 55103

RE: Support for SF 3561, Packaging Waste and Cost Reduction Act

Dear Chair Hawj, Vice Chair McEwen, and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **SF 3561** to create an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program for packaging materials and paper products in Minnesota that will support resource conservation through waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and sustainability.

The Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) is a national policy expert and consulting nonprofit that pioneered product stewardship in the United States along with a coalition of hundreds of state and local government officials, including those in Minnesota. Since 2000, PSI's policy models have helped to develop producer responsibility policies for many of the 136 EPR laws enacted for 18 industry sectors in 33 states. PSI is pleased to have had the opportunity to assist in the development of SF 3561 and is impressed with how those basic elements are being adapted and crafted to fit the needs and concerns of Minnesota stakeholders.

SF 3561 will provide crucial funding from producers to **relieve municipalities of the financial burdens** they currently face in operating recycling programs, **create local jobs, and stimulate local industries** such as MRFs and material processors. Various waste haulers have indicated they view EPR as a beneficial business opportunity as they fight to win EPR contracts in Canada and soon in the U.S. once programs are up and running. Despite the argument that packaging EPR will significantly raise consumer prices, SF 3561 will not raise consumer prices, as proven by various studies analyzing packaging EPR programs across the world, including a 2022 Columbia University study on packaging EPR in Canada.

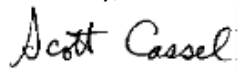
The bill does an exemplary job of establishing clear roles and responsibilities for program participants related to stewardship plans, reporting requirements, public education, and enforcement. The bill also incorporates emerging best practices for packaging EPR regarding needs assessments, definitions, waste reduction, reuse, responsible end markets, performance measures and targets, and the role of the Advisory Council.

How the bill incorporates waste reduction and reuse into the fabric of the EPR program is especially commendable, as both elements are woven into the needs assessment (including investments needed), program plans, educational efforts, and performance targets. The bill is also notable for addressing environmental justice concerns, the reduction of toxics in packaging, and the need for health and safety protections, including a living wage, for workers in this industry.

Packaging EPR has been successfully implemented throughout Europe and Asia for over 35 years and in five Canadian provinces for over 15 years. Four states – Colorado, Oregon, California, and Maine – have passed EPR for packaging laws.

I urge you to **support SF 3561** for the financial and environmental health of Minnesota's economy. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (617) 513-3954, or Scott@ProductStewardship.US.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Cassel". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Scott Cassel
Chief Executive Officer/Founder