



# MINNESOTA NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

March 13, 2024

Re: SF 3561 (Packaging Waste and Cost Reduction Act)

Dear Chair Dziedzic and Members of the State and Local Government and Veterans Committee:

I write on behalf of Minnesota's 260 newspapers to respectfully request newspapers be removed from SF 3561. Imposing on newspapers and magazines the regulatory obligations and associated expense of compliance with the program created in this bill would have a severely negative impact on them, even though newspapers and magazines are not principal contributors to the waste problem in Minnesota. Including them in the bill would yield minimal environmental benefits at a very high cost of compliance for Minnesota's newspapers. MNA and its members would have made this case to the bill's proponents had we been engaged by them during stakeholder discussions during the bill's development. Unfortunately, Minnesota's newspapers were unaware of this proposal until the bill was introduced, despite so clearly being impacted by these regulations. All states but one that have enacted producer responsibility related laws have exempted newspapers – either specifically or by removing paper in general – and we ask the Minnesota legislature to do the same.

For more than 30 years, both newspapers and magazines have encouraged their readers to recycle. Newspapers are recycled at a rate of more than 64 percent, higher than any other product, and magazines have a similar success rate while recycling 100 percent of leftover retail product. Newspapers and magazines are environmentally friendly as well. Newspapers use soy-based non-toxic inks, so newsprint is fully compostable and biodegrades in a matter of months. Magazines use linseed-oil-based non-toxic inks and soluble adhesives that do not contaminate or disrupt the recycling process and are similarly 100 percent biodegradable within months. Both newspapers and magazines can be recycled multiple times before the fibers become too short and weak to be reused.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, newspapers comprise only 1.7 percent of municipal solid waste and magazines comprise 0.3 percent. Furthermore, the newspaper category also includes directories and other forms of printed paper, so the percentage of actual discarded newspapers is even lower.

It is also a fact that newspaper and magazine print volumes are declining as their readers increasingly move to publishers' digital products. Thus, there is likely to be diminished print demand and a reduced number of newspapers and magazines entering the waste stream system in the future.

It also bears noting that the function performed by newspapers is very different from that of most other products in the waste stream. Newspapers provide vital news and information to residents of the state, frequently addressing environmental issues. Given the current degree of disruption in the newspaper and magazine business and the stress on newspaper budgets, the kinds of additional expenses imposed by SF 3561 would literally deprive residents of news and information: Newsroom budgets would be reduced, and in many cases, home delivery of printed newspapers would become unsustainably expensive. The costly work to position newspapers to continue serving Minnesota communities into the future, in print and online, would also be impeded.

We would like to thank Senator Morrison for taking our request under consideration and we hope the Committee will also do so as you discuss this proposal.

Sincerely,

Lisa Hills

Executive Director, Minnesota Newspaper Association