

March 31, 2025

Minnesota Senate
State and Local Government



Re: Removal of the Plastic Bag Ban Preemption (SF1598)

Dear Chair Xiong and Members of the Committee

Eureka Recycling is committed to improving recycling and reducing waste in Minnesota. SF1598 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, plastic bags placed in the recycling bin are dangerous for our team members and add considerable cost to doing business.

Plastic bags and film cause major issues in our Material Recovery Facility (MRF). Key impacts include:

Contamination: Plastic bags wrap around rotating discs on screens preventing them from working effectively to move and sort material. In a recent study completed at our MRF, we measured and sorted material removed from the screens on three separate dates and found that bags and plastic wrap were between 29% and 38% of the contaminants stuck in the screens by weight.

Cost to our Business: On average, we need to shut down our facility for 2 hours each day just to cut out of our machinery - this is about six to ten hours of labor each day and costs us about \$100,000 a year. In a recent instance, we had to replace a motor that was fried because a plastic bag blew into it and melted from the heat and then the melted plastic caused electrical issues that broke the motor. This single plastic bag cost us \$600

Danger for Workers: In addition to the cost, this is dangerous work. Our team members need to crawl into the equipment in order to access the bags. It's also not an easy job when plastic bags wrap around our machinery.

Our state legislature should be empowering local communities to take action on climate change. SF1598 simply allows local communities to decide if and how they should address the proliferation of single-use plastic bags. We are happy to provide additional information and would welcome the opportunity to speak more about this issue and welcome you at our MRF to see these challenges in real time.

Sincerely,

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

Lucy Mullany
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