



## **MINNESOTA GROCERS ASSOCIATION**

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Members of the Senate State & Local Government Committee:

The Minnesota Grocers Association (MGA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments in opposition to Article 7, Section 11 of the DE amendment to SF3045, the State & Local Government omnibus bill, which seeks to repeal the current statute that prevents political subdivisions from imposing bans on merchant bags.

MGA and its members take great pride in being active participants in the communities we serve. We are committed to environmental stewardship and continuously innovate in packaging, recycling, and repurposing. The Minnesota food industry has long been a leader in voluntary recycling efforts and is dedicated to reducing waste in meaningful ways.

For over a decade, our members have proactively encouraged customers to reduce, reuse, and recycle by offering plastic recycling services at our stores. Through these efforts, millions of pounds of plastic are recycled annually. This includes not only bags used in stores but also the various plastic products and bags that accumulate in homes. Local bag bans could undermine these significant voluntary initiatives, which have already shown minimal impact on litter reduction and waste management, while introducing unintended consequences.

Evidence from California and New Jersey highlights the negative outcomes of bag restrictions. Between 2014 and 2022, California saw a 47% increase in plastic bag waste, while New Jersey's plastic bag waste nearly tripled—from 53 million pounds to 151 million pounds. This increase is largely due to consumers purchasing thicker reusable bags that are eventually discarded.

We are also concerned about the impact a patchwork of local ordinances will have on consumers. The retail food industry is committed to ensuring our customers have access to all the conveniences and choices they need during their shopping experience. A patchwork of varying local laws will create confusion for consumers and could lead to inequitable outcomes.

On behalf of our members, we oppose the creation of a patchwork of local regulations and respectfully request that this provision be removed from the bill until a comprehensive statewide solution can be developed with input from all stakeholders.

Sincerely,

Steve Barthel  
Director of Government Relations  
Minnesota Grocers Association