



Minnesota Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee
Chair Matt Klein

March 1, 2024

Re: Supporting SF 3561

Chair Klein and Members,

Minnesota Environmental Partnership (MEP) is a statewide coalition of more than 70 environment and conservation organizations- and other groups that align with MEP's mission and collaborative approach. MEP and the organizations signing below are writing in support of [SF3561](#), the Packaging Waste and Cost Reduction Act. The bill passed out of the Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy Committee. We ask that this bill be heard soon in the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee so we can continue to work with stakeholders to strengthen the bill as it moves through the legislative process.

Minnesota has a growing waste problem, with 2021 seeing almost 6 million tons of municipal solid waste across the state. More than half of that waste is buried in our landfills and burned in our incinerators. We have supported and advocated for a taxpayer funded, incentive-based recycling system for decades, but it's not working. We cannot continue business as usual. The Packaging Waste and Cost Reduction Act addresses the problematic and unnecessary packaging that is polluting our environment and adding significant costs to communities by holding producers responsible and driving them towards much needed changes.

The bill takes the following actions:

Prioritizes Waste Reduction: We cannot recycle and compost our way out of this packaging crisis, we must prioritize reduction. The bill requires producers to meet targets for source reduction, reuse, recycling and composting, and post-consumer recycled content. These targets will be enforced by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

Drives Packaging Redesign: Packaging producers will be charged a fee based on the amount and type of packaging used. The less packaging a company uses, the less they will pay. There are also financial incentives for companies to reduce unnecessary packaging and use nontoxic, reusable, recyclable and compostable materials. Some companies are already leading the way to demonstrate how this can be done.

Creates Equitable & Free Access to Recycling: Recycling is a growing financial burden for local governments and individual families. The program will provide free recycling for all Minnesotans, by requiring producers to reimburse local governments for the cost of these programs.

Supports Quality Jobs: The program ensures that priority for service provider contracts is given to Minnesota companies that provide good jobs, strong safety standards, and quality services. Additionally, investments in reuse and recycling infrastructure will create new jobs across our state.

Strengthens Minnesota's Economy: Businesses are struggling to source the metal, paper, plastic, and glass needed to make new packaging and products. Meanwhile, each year Minnesota buries and burns over 1 million tons of recyclables worth an estimated \$143 million. By recycling more, we can create a reliable domestic supply of recycled metal, paper, plastic, and glass to make new products.

Packaging waste has increased while recycling in Minnesota has stagnated for over a decade. Our system is plagued by volatile commodity markets, increasing contamination rates due to unrecyclable packaging, limited local government resources, inequities in services, and a patchwork system of programs. This bill can reduce our waste and usher in systemic improvements and community benefits.

We are happy to provide additional information and appreciate your consideration of our request for a timely hearing in the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protections Committee on this important bill.

Sincerely,



Steve Morse
Executive Director

Submitted on behalf of the following organizations:

Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota

Clean Water Action Minnesota

Eureka Recycling

Lakeville Friends of the Environment

League of Women Voters Minnesota

Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

Resilient Cities and Communities