

March 11, 2024



Dear House State and Local Government Finance and Policy committee,

Re: Packaging Waste & Cost Reduction Act (HF3577 / SF3561)

The Minnesota Composting Council (MNCC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the development, expansion, and promotion of the composting industry in Minnesota based on sound science, principles of sustainability, and economic viability. We are the official state chapter of the United States Composting Council and our membership represents a wide variety of stakeholders including local governments, educational institutions, composters, compostable products manufacturers, equipment manufacturers, Minnesota residents, and more.

We would like to express sincere gratitude to the Partnership on Waste & Energy (PWE) and Representative Jordan for involving the MNCC and our membership to the table to participate in the development of the Packaging Waste & Cost Reduction Act. We greatly appreciate that compostable products and packaging are included in the bill. We have heard from stakeholders in other states who have passed similar bills that didn't fully incorporate compostables into the extended producer responsibility (EPR) system and are now having difficult discussions as to how they will be included.

As currently written, the bill requires all packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2032. This means the quantity of compostable packaging distributed into the state is likely to increase as products are redesigned to meet these requirements. There are also many food-service applications in which it doesn't make sense for packaging to be recyclable - like at our stadiums, the State Fair, other large public events, and in all food-service applications where sorting of utensils, straws and condiment cups from containers is unlikely to happen. If products in these venues aren't compostable and organics are being collected for composting, either the recycling will be contaminated with food or the organics will be contaminated with petroleum-based plastics resulting in increased costs to compost site operators to manage non-compostable materials and possible lower revenues from the sale of lower quality finished compost product.

Since there will be more compostable packaging in the future and communities and composters have similar collection and processing costs for compostables, it is imperative that producers are assessed a fee for compostable packaging and that funding is allocated from the producer responsibility organization (PRO) to composters to process compostable materials and manage contamination from 'look-alikes'. Studies have shown that compostable products help capture additional food for composting. Diverting organics for composting - both food scraps and compostable packaging - is necessary to meet state recycling and climate goals.

We thank you for doing your due diligence to ensure compostable products and the composting system are given the appropriate weight and remain included in this bill.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Kellie Kish, Legislative Committee Chair  
Minnesota Composting Council

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