



MINNESOTA GROCERS ASSOCIATION

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April 18, 2024

Chair Klevorn and Members of the House State & Local Government Committee:

The Minnesota Grocers Association thanks you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in opposition to the proposed provision in HF3431 that would repeal the current statute that prohibits a political subdivision from imposing a ban on merchant bags.

The Minnesota Grocers Association is the only state trade association representing the food industry of Minnesota. Minnesota has a unique culture of hundreds of hometown grocers and convenience stores, many of whom are independent, multi-generational, and locally owned. We have over 300 members with over 1,300 locations statewide, which includes food producers, manufacturers, brokers, and wholesaler members. Our industry provides over 150,000 jobs in the state – both union and non-union.

The MGA and its membership are incredibly proud to be a part of the communities we serve. As an industry, we take our role as an environment steward seriously. Our members are innovators when it comes to packaging, recycling, and repurposing. The Minnesota food industry is a leader in voluntary recycling, and is dedicated to aggressive waste reduction.

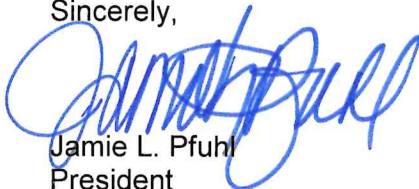
For over a decade we have voluntarily encouraged our shoppers to reduce, reuse, and recycle by offering plastic recycling at our locations. As a convenient drop spot, millions of pounds of plastic are recycled annually by your local grocers. These recycled products are not just the bags used at our stores, they are all the plastic products and bags used within a home. Local bag restrictions have the potential to interfere with the many outstanding voluntary efforts that are already underway. They have shown a minuscule impact on litter and reducing waste, and create a multitude of unintended consequences.

Our number one concern as an industry is the effect the patchwork of ordinances will have on our customers. The retail food industry prides itself on its ability to ensure that our consumers have all the conveniences and choices they need and deserve during their shopping experience. Operating in an environment of varying local laws will cause customer confusion and has the potential to have an unequitable effect.

Conversations around recycling, repurposing, and responsibility this legislative session have focused on creating statewide recommendations and systems. Contrarily, this provision would create a city-by-city patchwork policy.

On behalf of our membership, we express our opposition to creating a patchwork of local regulations and would ask this provision be removed from the bill until an effective statewide solution can be developed by all impacted stakeholders.

Sincerely,



Jamie L. Pfuhl
President