



April 17, 2024

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

As a collection of 1,200 storefronts across the state, including main street retailers, regional stores and national brands, we would like to share our opposition to the inclusion of Rep. Jordan's HF 3345 (removing the prohibition on banning merchant bags at the local level) in the State and Local omnibus bill.

Our policy position on this matter is very straightforward: "We oppose the bag ban repeal, and connected to that, we hope to support a future statewide solution that offers consistency for consumers, uniformity for retailers, and is developed in partnership with all stakeholders."

A repeal should only be done when a statewide approach is adopted. We believe that decisions of this magnitude, impacting consumers, retailers, suppliers, and many others should be made holistically and at the statewide level rather than through differing local ordinances. This ensures clarity, predictability, and avoids confusion for all parties involved.

A statewide solution is important for consumers as consistency is crucial for fairness and expectations. Consumers should not face varying regulations and practices depending on their location in Minnesota. A statewide approach ensures that all consumers are treated equally and know what to expect regardless of where they shop.

Uniformity for retailers across the state creates a system where cost disparities for retailers and consumers are avoided, thus again addressing the issue of fairness. When retailers operate under consistent regulations statewide, they can plan more effectively, ensure they are good partners in compliance, and prevent unnecessary financial burdens that could ultimately be passed on to consumers.

Lastly, any statewide approach to bags should be developed with all stakeholders, including advocates, retailers, and consumers. Collaboration among these groups is essential to crafting a comprehensive and balanced solution that takes into account diverse perspectives and concerns.

If the local bag ban is repealed, it should only be done alongside a well-thought-out statewide plan that addresses the needs of all stakeholders. We are committed and ready to engage in constructive conversations that creates a solution that works for everyone involved and meets our sustainability and environment goals.

Thank you for considering our testimony. We urge the committee to remove this provision and we look forward to further discussions on this important matter.

Sincerely,

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

Bruce Nustad
President