

March 12, 2019

Hon. Mike Freiberg, Chair
Government Operations Committee
75 Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Opposition to HF 511

Chair Freiberg and members of the committee:

My name is Matt Seaholm, and on behalf of the American Progressive Bag Alliance (APBA), which represents American plastic bag manufacturers and recyclers, I would like to submit this statement for the record.

The APBA believes that legislation should focus on consistency to avoid the punitive costs and red-tape complications of regulatory patchworks. Currently, Minnesota law says that any carryout bag regulations must be implemented on the state level rather than in cities and towns. We support this as it provides a level of regulatory consistency across the many localities in Minnesota. Along with the North Star State, other states including Indiana, Florida, Michigan, Missouri, Iowa, Idaho, North Carolina, and Wisconsin have legislation that ensures these policies fall under the purview of the state, rather than individual municipalities. HF 511 would dismantle this common-sense legislation in Minnesota and allow for unwieldy regulatory patchworks throughout the state.

Unfortunately, we see these patchworks occur in states where there are no uniformity laws. This shortsighted approach leads to regulatory chaos and confusion not just for the industry, but also for the hardworking business owners and consumers who live and work where they are enacted. When carryout bags are regulated at the local level, it is common to see rules that vary from city to city and from county to county. These local ordinances may not only include a ban or fee on certain items, but they also commonly establish varying manufacturing standards for products.

These inconsistent laws and regulations have serious drawbacks. Without statewide uniformity, APBA member companies could be faced with having to develop city-specific product lines, threatening their ability to achieve economies of scale in production. The grocery stores, shops, and restaurants that purchase their products – many of which have multiple locations throughout a state – could be forced to change out the entire stock of products at some locations and not others, charge fees at some locations and not others, and simultaneously master and keep up with a different sets of compliance requirements for each city ordinance. Inevitably, these costs get passed down to customers, making the cost of groceries and other items higher.

For all of these reasons, we believe any carryout bag policies are best determined at the state level. Thank you for considering our perspective. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.



Matt Seaholm
Executive Director, American Progressive Bag Alliance

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