

# Protecting Our Waters from Plastic Pollution: Boat Shrink-Wrapping

## HF3320 (Kraft)

### Plastic is finding its way into more and more aspects of our lives, even storing

**boats!** Plastic creates serious toxic impacts across its entire lifecycle, with low-income communities and communities of color most impacted. Communities are impacted by air and water pollution stemming from plastic production and use. We are all exposed to the chemicals contained in everyday plastics, from the food we eat that is wrapped in plastic to the vinyl flooring in our homes. Over half of all plastics ever made were produced in the last 15 years and only 5-6% of all plastics are recycled. The rest are landfilled or incinerated.



And the problem is only getting worse. As the energy infrastructure transitions toward more renewable sources, industry is shifting toward more plastic production.<sup>3</sup> If left unchecked, plastic production is set to triple by 2060.<sup>4</sup> If plastic production continues at its current pace, the emissions from this production could reach 1.34 gigatons per year — equivalent to the emissions released by more than 295 new 500-megawatt coal-fired power plants.<sup>5</sup>

Since fossil fuel based plastics are the primary use of toxic chemical additives, the increase of plastics production means increased production and exposure to toxic chemicals. In addition, there are over 10,000 chemicals used in plastics production, many with no information on their hazards.

Now, about those boats. Did you know that many are shrink-wrapped in plastic to protect them when they're out of the water over the winter?

## In Minnesota...

- We lead the nation in boats per capita with roughly 14,500 vessels per 100,000 population.<sup>1</sup>
- In 2022, boat registrations in the state totaled 822,450, second only to Florida.<sup>1</sup> Of these, about 90% are large enough to be shrink wrapped.<sup>6</sup>
- Based on data from other states, it's likely that 180,000 — 300,000 MN boats are shrink-wrapped every year.<sup>7</sup> A 30-foot boat takes 30 pounds of plastic to wrap.<sup>2</sup>
- If 250,000 boats received an average of 25 pounds of wrap each — a moderate estimate — the waste would total 6.25 million pounds of plastic every year, with the vast majority of that entering our landfills.<sup>1</sup>
- Currently only a miniscule amount of this plastic is recycled and kept out of the waste stream.

## What does this legislation do?

- Creates a product stewardship program to responsibly recycle and reuse boat shrink-wrap.
- Requires producers, through membership in a stewardship organization, to implement and finance a statewide product stewardship program to reduce the volume of boat wrap disposed of in landfills by promoting and providing for the collection and recycling of boat wrap.
- Sets goals and a mechanism for tracking progress towards recycling the majority of boat shrink-wrap plastic used in Minnesota.

## Why will this work?

- A mechanical technology exists that uses chemical free, toxic free methods to turn used boat plastic into resin. This resin is then turned back into boat plastic. There is even a company in Minnesota that can do this today.



1 <https://www.startribune.com/boat-shrink-wrap-winter-minnesota-legislature/600311603/>

2 <https://themainemonitor.org/shrink-wrap-coming-off-maine-boats-and-then-what>

3 <https://www.cnn.com/2022/01/29/how-the-fossil-fuel-industry-is-pushing-plastics-on-the-world-.html>

4 <https://oecd.org/environment/global-plastic-waste-set-to-almost-triple-by-2060.htm>

5 <https://www.ciel.org/project-update/plastic-climate-the-hidden-costs-of-a-plastic-planet/>

6 <https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/good-question-minnesota-boat-ownership/>

7 <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/afd2a2070d914b9ca87e98b95a855cce>

March 5, 2024

Representative Rick Hansen  
Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee  
407 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**RE: Support for H.F. 3320**

Dear Chair Hansen and Members of the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy Committee,

The Partnership on Waste and Energy (Partnership) is a Joint Powers Board consisting of Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington counties, formed to address waste management and energy issues. The Partnership seeks to end waste, promote renewable energy and enhance the health and resiliency of communities we serve while advancing equity and responding to the challenges of a changing climate.

The Partnership supports product stewardship approaches that engage manufacturers in efforts to keep their products out of landfills and disposal facilities and offer consumers convenient recycling options, all without burdening taxpayers.

H.F. 3320 requires manufacturers of boat wrap to implement and finance a statewide product stewardship program to recycle and reuse this material. Boat wrap is discarded from various boat storage facilities in all three counties represented by the Partnership. Years of effort by some counties, recycling organizations and businesses to develop pilot projects and stimulate end markets for the material have laid the groundwork for recovering and recycling this material. However, efforts appear to be stalled, with limited impact.

H.F. 3320 takes a more comprehensive approach that will bring all boat wrap manufacturers to the table, a stronger platform for significantly reducing disposal through manufacturer-led recycling and reuse programs. Among the several valuable provisions in the bill that the Partnership supports is the inclusion of local government in stakeholder consultation in the development of the stewardship plan required in the bill.

The Partnership thanks Rep. Kraft for introducing H.F. 3320. We encourage favorable action on this bill as one of many solutions needed to advance zero-waste goals and a circular economy.

Sincerely,



Commissioner Victoria A. Reinhardt, Ramsey County  
Chair, Partnership on Waste and Energy

Mr. Chair and members of the committee... thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Joe Shneider, and I am here as a concerned citizen and as the founder of the City of Shorewood's Recycling Committee. Our city borders Lake Minnetonka and includes the majority of Christmas Lake as well. So, you could say that boating is in our city's DNA.

As we were starting our Recycling Committee efforts, we looked for big opportunity areas that would allow us to keep recyclable materials from going into the solid waste disposal stream. Two large opportunities emerged that were related to recreational boating. These include:

1. the high volume of single-use recyclable cans and bottles from boaters who are on the water for the day, and
2. the boat shrink wrap used to protect boats from the elements during the winter months.

But unfortunately, neither one represented low hanging fruit. I won't go into the single-use recyclables here, but I would like to talk about the boat shrink wrap.

I have personal experience with shrink wrap as I am an active boater with boats that need to be protected in the winter. The largest of which is a pontoon boat.

For years, I did what everyone else did at the end of the boating season and took my pontoon to a service provider to be winterized and shrink-wrapped in either blue or white plastic. Every spring I would cut off the shrink wrap as I readied the boat for the season... and that's where my frustration began. There was nothing to do with the plastic other than put it into the solid waste stream where it would end up in a landfill or be incinerated. As you probably know, Minnesota has more than 800,000 registered watercraft, more than all other states except for Florida. And the amount of boat shrink wrap used here annually is staggering.

What a waste! What a long-term problem! What an opportunity!

"Reduce, reuse, recycle". That's the mantra for solid waste. I had a need to protect my pontoon, so **reduce** wasn't an option. I couldn't **recycle** the shrink wrap because no one would take it. But I could **reuse** a cover. And so I cobbled together a reusable cover with tarps that is still my solution today. It's not a solution for everyone, but recycling could be, and should be.

Why wasn't recycling available for the huge amount of plastic wrap that gets used for boat storage? A shortage of local processing plants ... transportation challenges... communication challenges... behavioral challenges. Yes, they are all pieces of the puzzle, but they can be solved.

I am encouraged by the attention given by large consumer food companies to reduce the plastic packaging films go into the waste stream as part of their sustainability programs. And I was encouraged by the pilot film recycling plant

developed by MyPlas. But we need a big push to get recycling boat shrink wrap into the mainstream in Minnesota.

That's why I am so supportive of House File 3320.

This is good public policy that is needed for Minnesota, and I hope you will support it.

With that, I'd like to thank you for your time and attention today.

March 5, 2024

RE: SUPPORT of HF 3320 (Kraft)

Dear Chair Hansen and members of the Committee,

My name is James Nicholson and I am grateful that you are hearing this bill. I am also thankful that Representative Kraft is working so hard on this issue.

I brought this idea to Representative Kraft because plastic boat wrap waste is a problem for Minnesota. It is clogging up our landfills with a fossil fuel product that can and should be recycled. As many thousands of Minnesotans are forced to do each year, I unwrap my boat and reluctantly toss the wrap in the garbage because there is no environmentally sensible alternative.

Minnesota is a boating state, and that means we have to be responsible with the waste this sport entails. Conservative estimates predict that this bill will prevent about 6 million pounds of plastic in our landfills. That means fewer chemicals from plastic leaching into our groundwater, less space in our already burdened landfills being used up, and less virgin plastic being used and produced year after year.

I appreciate your time and consideration and humbly ask for your support.

Sincerely,

James E. Nicholson

Chair Hansen and members of the committee, I am Avonna Starck, State Director of Clean Water Action. I represent our 132,000 Minnesota members regarding issues that keep our water safe to drink, cook with, and play in.

I don't think I can adequately say how much I love my boat. I grew up poor with a disabled parent and having a boat was always the epitome of happiness. To me, there is no better place than in the sun, covered in nontoxic sunscreen, on the water.

As a boat owner, I take responsible ownership and use seriously. Recently our canvas cover ripped and let me tell you - it was not cheap. My fiance suggested plastic wrap and you can imagine how that went for him.

Minnesota leads the nation in boats per capita with roughly 14,500 boats per 100,000 people. The one pager in your packet gives you a lot of stats, let's focus on the fact that a moderate estimate of 6.25 million pounds of shrink wrap a year is used in Minnesota - and that ends up in landfills.

Y'all have heard me say a lot that 98 out of our 101 landfills are leaching. This bill creates a product stewardship system to responsibly mechanically recycle boat wrap and turn it back into boat wrap. It creates jobs in Minnesota. And it keeps toxic chemicals that are in plastic out of landfills and out of our water.

There are tens of thousands of chemicals in plastic - many with known negative health impacts. And many chemicals that are yet to be studied. We also know that plastic breaks down into microplastics and pollutes aquatic animals and water, which we then eat and drink. Growing [evidence](#) suggests microplastics can accumulate in the body and trigger oxidative stress, inflammation, [insulin resistance](#), and liver issues. As you know, they are found in placenta, cord blood, and sperm. Babies are born exposed.

As a boat owner, I am excited to engage in a process that reduces waste and protects our water. The cost to boat owners is extremely low and well worth it when you consider the return on investment. For less than the cost of a large bottle of sunscreen, one boat worth of plastic is recycled.

I urge your support of HF3320 and sincerely thank Representative Kraft for supporting our waterways through this bill. Thank you.



Scott Cassel  
**Chief Executive Officer/Founder**

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March 5, 2024

Representative Rick Hansen, Chair  
Representative Sydney Jordan, Vice-Chair  
House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy  
10 State Office Building  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

**RE: Support for HF 3320, Boat Wrap Product Stewardship.**

Dear Chair Hansen, Vice-Chair Jordan, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **HF 3320** to create an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) program for boat wrap in Minnesota that will support resource conservation through waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and sustainability.

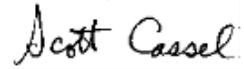
Minnesota leads the nation in boats per capita, with roughly 14,500 vessels per 100,000 population. Every winter, 180,000 to 300,000 boats must be winterized to survive the harsh Minnesota winters, but protecting these boats requires wrapping them in millions of pounds of plastic film, most of which is landfilled in the spring.

Minnesota already has experience enacting and implementing four EPR laws – for rechargeable batteries, electronics, paint, and mercury-containing thermostats. HF 3320 would build on the success of these programs and ensure the safe end-of-life management of boat wrap through a program funded and managed by boat wrap producers. HF 3320 incorporates the basic elements that PSI believes are critical for successful EPR legislation, including the formation of a producer responsibility organization, the development of a stewardship plan, stakeholder engagement, transparency requirements, and annual reporting from obligated producers.

The Product Stewardship Institute (PSI) is a national policy expert and consulting nonprofit that pioneered product stewardship in the United States along with a coalition of hundreds of state and local government officials, including those in Minnesota. Since 2000, PSI's policy models have helped to develop producer responsibility policies for many of the 136 EPR laws enacted for 18 industry sectors in 33 states.

I urge you to **support HF 3320** for the financial and environmental health of Minnesota's economy. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (617) 513-3954, or [Scott@ProductStewardship.US](mailto:Scott@ProductStewardship.US).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Cassel". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Scott Cassel  
Chief Executive Officer/Founder