

Testimony of Deanna White to the House Commerce Committee March 10, 2021

Good afternoon Chair Stephenson and members of the committee,

My name is Deanna White, and I am the Minnesota State Director of Clean Water Action. Clean Water Action and its more than 50,000 members across Minnesota support HF1165, which would modify labeling requirements for biodegradable and compostable products.

This legislation is critically important to the proper function of our waste stream and the protection of Minnesota's natural resources. As we collectively learn more about the harmful effects of plastics and chemical additives to our water and our bodies, consumers are trying to reduce their impact by using compostable products. Currently, products that seem eco-friendly may still contain plastic lining or PFAS "forever chemicals", neither of which break down fully in our environment.

Unfortunately, the lack of clear requirements in Minnesota statute has led us to recommend to our members that they should not purchase compostable products unless they have been certified from a reputable third party such as Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) or similar. HF1165 will provide clarity for businesses who wish to market their products as biodegradable or compostable, and empower consumers to make informed choices when they wish to buy such products.

Finally, we are encouraged by the increase of organics recycling programs in cities and counties across Minnesota, and strongly believe that HF1165 will allow for lower costs of operations and ensure long-term success for these programs. Ramsey and Washington Counties, for example, will be rolling out curbside organics collection starting in 2022, including thousands more residents and businesses in composting. With clear labeling requirements, we are confident that more will be willing and able to participate in that program, and the receiving facility will be able to scale up operations with less difficulty.

For the benefit of waste receivers, businesses, and consumers alike, we urge you to pass HF1165. Thank you for your time and consideration.



Deanna White
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