



CONSERVATION
MINNESOTA

March 26, 2024

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

Conservation Minnesota urges your support for HF3345 (Jordan) which will remove the prohibition on local ordinances banning the use of plastic bags. Plastic bags create expensive problems for our local recycling systems and plastic pollution is a growing public health concern. This bill will restore the ability of Minnesota communities to address these problems in ways that work for best for their citizens.

Minnesotans throw away more than 500 tons of plastic bags and packaging every day. The MPCA estimates that less than 10% of plastic bags are recycled. The plastic bags that enter our solid waste system are costly to taxpayers and a burden to our local governments, especially through contamination of the recycling stream. Plastic bags get caught in machinery in recycling facilities, where they slow down sorting, contaminate materials to be sold on the recycling resale market, and can even cause fires.

Plastic bags are also a problem for our environment and our health. It is estimated that 22 million pounds of plastic pollution enter the Great Lakes annually. Microplastics are now commonly found in fish tissue and water bodies in our state.

Further, plastics are made up of roughly 13,000 different chemicals, with 3,200 of those being listed as chemicals of concern. Health impacts from the chemicals in plastic include cardiovascular disease and stroke, infertility, cancer, thyroid problems, obesity, diabetes, and more.

Local governments need the ability to design solutions to these problems that work for their communities and citizens, especially when they are addressing problems that impact public health and safety and the water we drink. We urge you to support HF 3345 which restores the ability of Minnesota communities to decide if restricting the use of plastic bags in retail sales is best for them.

Sincerely,

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