



March 10, 2024

Dear Chair Klevorn and members of the Committee,

We are writing to you in partnership. Like you, we have been elected to serve our community by crafting policies that best address our constituents' needs. As city council members and county commissioners, we support repealing the plastic bag preemption for a number of reasons. We send this letter with the hope that you will hear this bill in committee, send it for a floor vote, and vote YES to end the backwards plastic bag preemption that is currently holding Minnesota back from thinking innovatively and creatively about the plastic waste crisis we are all facing.

Currently, Minnesota law prohibits local governments from passing ordinances concerning the use of plastic bags. We disagree with this law and extend our support to you in reversing this archaic approach to both governing and sustainability.

1. Local Control - As elected officials, we take our duty to represent the voices of our communities seriously. This preemption inhibits our ability to make decisions for our cities and counties as we've been directed to do by the voters. **We ask that you restore local control and repeal the plastic bag preemption.** Every community in Minnesota is unique and a one-size-fits-all approach to plastic bag use simply isn't right for Minnesota.
2. Sustainability - As long as this preemption is in place, Minnesota is sending the message to its residents and the rest of the country that it doesn't care about the plastic waste crisis and that it doesn't respect local control. As our landfills overflow and as our waterways become increasingly polluted by plastic waste and the toxic chemicals that leach from them, we must take urgent action. **While this legislation is not a ban on plastic bags, it allows communities to have sustainability focused conversations that are appropriate for them.** This bill is not a call to ban bags, it is a call to untie our hands so that we can approach the issue of sustainability in a way that works for each one of our unique communities.

We are grateful for the work you do at the legislature. We ask that you schedule a hearing for HF3345 (Jordan)/SF3541 (McEwen) quickly. We recognize that this legislative session is a short one and there's a lot to do. But this is an important issue that will set Minnesota up for success in the long run.

We thank you for your time and consideration.

In Partnership with Clean Water Action,

Rachel James, Columbia Heights City Council
Connie Buesgens, Columbia Heights City Council
Lori Saroya, Blaine City Council
Julie Risser, Edina City Council
Nicole Joy Frethem, Ramsey County
Commissioner
Justice Spriggs, Columbia Heights City Council

Kari Rehauer, Coon Rapids City Council
David Ostwald, Fridley City Council
Kari Niedfeldt-Thomas, New Brighton Mayor
Mandy Meisner, Anoka County Commissioner
Wendy Durrwachter, Duluth City Council

Amáda Márquez Simula, Columbia Heights
Mayor
Mike Mayou, Duluth City Council
Roz Randorf, Duluth City Council