



## MINNESOTA GROCERS ASSOCIATION

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March 12, 2024

Chair Klevorn, Ranking Minority Member Nash, and Members of the House State and Local Government Finance and Policy Committee:

The Minnesota Grocers Association thanks you for the opportunity to express our concerns regarding HF3577, the Packaging Waste and Cost Reduction Act.

The Minnesota Grocers Association is the only state trade association representing the food industry of Minnesota. Minnesota has a unique culture of hundreds of hometown grocers and convenience stores, many of whom are independent, multi-generational, and locally owned. We have over 300 members with over 1,300 locations statewide, which includes food producers, manufacturers, brokers, and wholesaler members. Our industry provides over 150,000 jobs in the state – both union and non-union. The retail food industry is the backbone of Minnesota's prosperity, providing 1 out of every 20 jobs in our state.

From farm to fork, the challenges continue for the food industry of Minnesota. Increases in labor cost, severe workforce shortages, inflation in commodities, rising energy and transportation costs, as well as persistent supply chain problems test day-to-day operations. All of these factors and regulatory restriction put dramatic pressure on consumer baskets.

As an industry, we are deeply committed to the communities we serve. We take our role as an environment steward seriously. Our members are innovators when it comes to packaging, recycling, and repurposing. We appreciate the interest in a circular economy that can benefit all.

The MGA supports investment in proven programs and technologies that efficiently bring more clean material into the system. We support investments in recycling infrastructure and public education. Any changes to Minnesota's existing and successful recycling programs should be approached collaboratively with an acknowledgement of current packaging requirements, systems, and product availability. It is important that all facets of the program be thoughtfully vetted through each aspect of the supply chain to ensure the structure supports stated goals and is achievable without unintended consequences. Minnesota cannot act as an island, and advancement of extended producer responsibility must support a global supply chain.

On behalf of our membership, we thank you for the opportunity to voice our concerns. We thank Representative Jordan for meeting with us and for her willingness to discuss these concerns. We look forward to working collaboratively as this bill moves through the committee process.

Sincerely,

Jamie L. Pfuhl  
President  
Minnesota Grocers Association