



March 8, 2021

Dear Chairperson and members,

The Association of Recycling Managers (ARM) is submitting this letter in support of the expansion of Minnesota Law 325E.046, Standards for Labeling Plastic Bags, to also cover food and beverage products and packaging.

ARM is a Minnesota nonprofit that was created to bring together city, county, and state recycling staff. We meet regularly to share recycling strategies and educational resources with our members to ensure quality recycling programs in Minnesota. Many of our members have curbside or drop-site organics programs, or will in the near future, and this legislative change will help ensure those programs have continued success.

The proposed changes will reduce resident confusion by preventing companies from selling misleading products that are not actually compostable in our state. Terms like “biodegradable” or “made from plants” do not indicate a product is compostable, but many people do not understand the difference and end up purchasing problematic products. Our members educate residents to look for labeling, such as the word “compostable” or an approved third-party certification logo, so they know which items are acceptable to compost. The requirement for proper labeling will help consumers correctly identify certified compostable products.

The success of residential and commercial organics programs is especially important in the Twin Cities metro where the legislature mandated a recycling goal of 75% by 2030. Without organics diversion, that number will be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. Compostable food service items are part of that organics fraction and need to be labeled accurately so they end up in the right place.

Better labeling will also decrease the amount of non-compostable products ending up at composting facilities. This means that composters would have fewer contaminants to remove, resulting in high-quality compost which can be sold back to cities, counties, or the state for use in roadway projects and to residents for use in gardens and lawns. Strong, stable markets for finished compost are important for the viability of the composting facilities that process organics and yard waste. Strong markets are built on quality product.

In summary, to help support successful waste diversion programs, reduce consumer confusion, and create high-quality compost, the Association of Recycling Managers urges the legislature to expand the existing labeling law to cover food and beverage packaging.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Barker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Emily" and last name "Barker" clearly distinguishable.

Emily Barker
ARM Chair