



SIERRA CLUB

NORTH STAR CHAPTER

Sierra Club North Star Chapter
2300 Myrtle Avenue, Suite 260
Saint Paul, MN 55114

March 25, 2024

Re: Support for HF 3345

Dear Chair Klevorn and State and Local Government Finance and Policy Committee Members:

We are writing on behalf of the North Star Chapter of Sierra Club in support of the following bill:
HF3345 / SF3541 - Prohibition on banning merchant bags removed.

Plastic is an inexpensive, convenient and effective product that we all use in some way every day. The US produces more than 35 million metric tons a year, and that number is growing. However, there is a cost to all that plastic. Frontline communities, such as Cancer Alley in Louisiana, bear the brunt of air pollution from plastic production. Environmental justice communities in Minnesota are impacted from toxic leaching from landfills and air pollution from incinerators like the HERC in Minneapolis. And we all are exposed to health risks from plastic particles in our air and water. Recent health studies have found microplastics in blood, lung tissue, and even in placentas and breast milk. Plastic does not belong in our bodies. Reducing single-use plastic is one thing that can reduce the health risk and environmental impact of plastic pollution.

This bill will return control to local governments who wish to reduce plastic in their own communities. It does not require bans of plastic bags but restores the right to do so. It allows local leaders to respond to requests from their own citizens. A nation-wide 2022 survey found 81% of Americans supported policies to reduce single-use plastic, at the national, state and local level.

Litter is also a problem for communities. A litter survey in Virginia found that plastic bags were a “top ten” litter item in every county in the state. Litter is an eyesore and an expensive problem for communities. They should have the tools they need to address it and this bill does that.

Some have concerns that consumers may be inconvenienced if plastic bags are not available, however, in communities with bans, residents have adapted and continue to shop at their local stores. A growing number of communities and state governments are taking actions to address the plastic problem. Minnesota is a leader in recycling and could also be a leader in addressing plastic pollution by restoring control to communities.

Sincerely,

Margaret Levin
State Director
Sierra Club North Star Chapter

Lori Olinger
Zero Waste Team
Sierra Club North Star Chapter