

March 10, 2023

Representative Zack Stephenson  
Chair, House Commerce Finance and Policy Committee  
449 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

**RE: Support for H.F. 1315**

Dear Chair Stephenson,

The Partnership on Waste and Energy is a Joint Powers Board formed by Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington counties to address waste management and energy issues. We support initiatives that keep products and materials in use for a more equitable circular economy. We are writing today to support H.F. 1315, authored by Representative Pursell.

Forty-three percent of Minnesota's waste was diverted from trash through recycling and organics recovery in 2020. The metro area has a statutory goal to divert 75% of waste from trash by 2030. Since organics comprise approximately 25% of the region's trash, success in achieving this goal requires significantly increasing the diversion of organics. Organics recycling also represents a major opportunity to reduce greenhouse gases from waste. H.F. 1315 will help counties reach the state's mandatory goals and reduce climate impacts.

The Partnership supports expanding Minnesota's plastic bag labeling standards law to apply to all food or beverage products and packaging, establishing certification requirements for compostability claims and requiring clear identification of products claiming to be certified as compostable.

The provisions in H.F. 1315 will:

- Help eliminate confusion for consumers, food establishments, recyclers and composting processors about the compostability of products. Currently, products labeled with terms such as "biodegradable" lead people to think they are compostable, when in fact they are not. This bill will result in less contamination of collected organics.
- Ensure products sold and distributed in this state are truly compostable by requiring certification. Third-party certification, such as through the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI), whose certification process is the most highly regarded in the composting industry, assures consumers and compost site operators that products will properly compost.
- Close the loop on organics recycling by helping to improve the quality of compost produced at compost sites. Local composters need organic material free of contamination

PARTNERSHIP ON WASTE AND ENERGY  
HENNEPIN | RAMSEY | WASHINGTON

100 Red Rock Road | Newport, MN 55055  
info@recyclingandenergy.org | 651-768-6670

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to consistently produce marketable end products for landscaping, road construction and garden projects. H.F. 1315 provides consumers clear information on what products are truly compostable so organic material delivered to compost sites is clean and ready to compost.

Organics recycling programs are rapidly expanding. H.F.1315 helps the increasing number of businesses and residents involved in these programs gain confidence in the materials they can divert from trash for composting.

- Hennepin County required the City of Minneapolis to begin curbside organics recycling in 2015, and St Louis Park added curbside organics collection in 2014. The county then revised its solid waste ordinance in 2018 to require certain commercial generators of organics to have a food waste recycling program starting in 2020 and require cities to offer new residential organics recycling programs in 2022.
- Ramsey and Washington counties, through Ramsey/Washington Recycling and Energy, have invested \$7 million of state bonding funds from the 2020 legislative session in a \$42 million recycling system upgrade at its Recycling and Energy Center. This will allow, among other things, for the roll-out of curbside food scraps collection for residents and businesses in the two counties, with pilot collection starting this year.

Thank you for considering H.F. 1315. The Partnership strongly supports passage of this bill as an important tool for the region and the state to achieve statutory recycling, waste diversion and climate protection goals.

Sincerely,



Commissioner Debbie Goettel, Hennepin County  
Chair, Partnership on Waste and Energy

cc: House Commerce Finance and Policy committee members