



April 11, 2018

Ginny Black, Chair  
Minnesota Composting Council  
11410 49<sup>th</sup> Place North  
Plymouth, MN 55442

RE: Opposition to SF 3253 and SF 3135

Dear Senator Chamberlain and Committee members,

The Minnesota Composting Council (MNCC) is a member driven non-profit dedicated to advancing the recycling of organic materials in Minnesota. To support our composters and recyclers in the State, The MNCC encourage you to oppose SF 3253 that limits local governments from adding taxes or fees on containers used for transporting, protecting or consuming food and [SF3135](#) that aims to prohibit counties, cities and towns from locally managing auxiliary containers including reusable and single-use food-service items. Further, the MNCC urges Senators to consider the adoption of any bill limiting counties and cities' ability to manage solid waste generated in their jurisdictions as undermining their ability to meet the statewide recycling goals.

In 2014, the State legislature amended 115A.551 to increase the recycling rate to 75% by 2030 for the Twin Cities Metro Area. Increasing the recycling goal reaffirms the State's desire to manage materials according to the Solid Waste Management Hierarchy and the economic, environmental and social benefits provided to the state by the composting and recycling industries. The [State's 2015 Solid Waste Policy Report](#) describes the importance of collecting organics for composting to meet the increased goal. Adoption of any bill limiting local units of government ability to put fees or bans on auxiliary containers directly contradicts actions taken by the Minnesota legislatures since 1980 when the Waste Management Act was passed.

Containers that are not compostable or recyclable must be thrown in the trash, increasing the amount of trash disposed of by local communities. These containers also result in increased contamination at processing facilities – raising costs for municipal recycling programs and resulting in the production of compost that contains so many contaminants it cannot be sold.

Ordinances, such as the Green to Go ordinance in Minneapolis and the Zero-Waste Packaging ordinance in St. Louis Park which require food be served in refillable, reusable, recyclable, or compostable packaging help reduce customer confusion, reduce contamination at composting and recycling facilities, and are helping these Cities increase their diversion rate, thus helping the state move closer to its recycling goal.

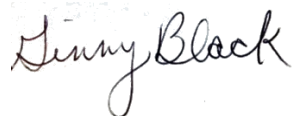
Finally, the [Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's 2013 waste characterization](#) found that up to 40% of what the average Minnesotan throws away are items that could have been composted. It verifies that programs that divert food and compostable food-service items must be established to be able to meet the 755 recycling goal for the Metro area.

The Sustainable Packaging Coalition study found that more food is diverted for composting when the food-service container is compostable. Without the ability to limit auxiliary containers to only those that are recyclable or compostable in our local waste management system, compost facilities may be hesitant to accept food-service containers in their operations due to contamination issues that prohibit the sale of finished compost. This could limit the expansion of the composting industry in Minnesota overall.

Adopting any bill limiting local government control of recyclable or compostable packaging would directly contradict and inhibit the State from meeting its goals and continuing to be the environmental leader that it is today - with low contamination rates in both our recycling and organics recycling programs. We highly encourage you to vote against these bills and any alterations thereof that would inhibit local units of government from regulating auxiliary containers.

Please feel free to contact us at [compostmn@gmail.com](mailto:compostmn@gmail.com) if you have any questions or would like supporting documentation for our comments. Thank you and we hope you continue to support the recycling and composting industries in Minnesota.

Sincerely,



Ginny Black  
MNCC Chair

cc: Representative Hornstein  
Representative Jessup  
Governor Dayton  
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Commissioner Stein