

UNITE HERE

Minnesota State Council of UNITE HERE Unions

#58
10/4 Council
Agenda

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CITY CLERK

September 22, 2017

Members of the Saint Paul City Council,

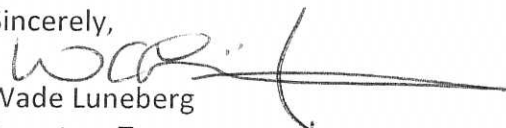
We call on you to oppose the current proposed changes to the “sustainable ‘to go’ food packaging” ordinance. As members of UNITE HERE Local 17, we represent more than 5,000 workers across the Twin Cities and Bloomington in hotels, restaurants, major sports facilities, our convention centers and MSP Airport. With our CBA/Employer partners we drive the standards in the industry and have turned traditionally lower wage jobs into middle class, self-sufficient and family supporting positions.

UNITE HERE Local 17 is concerned with the unintended consequences of mandating a ban of containers that ARE recyclable and cost-effective. Making restaurants increase their packaging costs three-fold or more when the alternatives are really viable, is forcing money that could otherwise be supporting jobs to go to buy packaging. We represent many immigrant communities, speaking more than 17 different languages. It is important that these communities have the ability to work and thrive at restaurants, cafes and catering companies. This ordinance puts an economic burden on the businesses without any relief or economic assistance which will translate into a loss of labor.

From our view this ban does not solve an environmental problem but could create a economic burden for our local restaurants. Restaurants operate on thin margins, and should not be expected to bear the brunt of a law that affects only them, when all other sources of these materials can continue to be sold and used in the city. Resources that could be going towards labor and the immigrant communities may instead go to paying for more expensive containers that may or may not get composted. If the goal is to reduce waste, the city should look towards a more comprehensive recycling and composting program.

Saint Paul should focus on creating higher paying jobs that will lift our neighbors out of poverty. Instead, this materials ban directly competes with labor interests and will make it more difficult for businesses to invest in their employees. If you support labor interests, please oppose this ordinance change. It is time for Saint Paul to support its workers, not pass language just to feel good.

Sincerely,


Wade Luneberg
Secretary Treasurer
UNITE HERE Local 17

Opeiu#12/WL/mt