



CITY OF SAINT PAUL

Mayor Christopher B. Coleman

*390 City Hall
15 West Kellogg Boulevard
Saint Paul, MN 55102*

Telephone: 651-266-8510

Facsimile: 651-228-8513

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Council President Russ Stark and
Members of the City Council
310-D City Hall
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Colleagues,

I am returning Res 17-1644 to you without my signature.

I am disappointed that, after months of work, we don't have an ordinance that would have put Saint Paul at the forefront of sustainability and given DSI the resources—principally an enforcement mechanism—they need to move forward.

While, on the surface, it may appear that this resolution is good substitute or an effective interim strategy, I don't think that is the case. My concerns are several:

- DSI does an excellent job of providing outreach and education around new areas of licensing or building code enforcement (e.g. tobacco sales, boulevard gardens, accessory housing units). In each of these cases, however, the education is built around the City's enforcement role—a role that is clearly understood by the community. DSI is in the enforcement business. Education supports DSI's enforcement role. It is not an end in and of itself.

Without a set of requirements to enforce, DSI's role becomes, at best, ambiguous and, at worst, confusing. What standard is DSI asking people to reach? What gives them the authority to discourage the use of one product and encourage the use of another? Why are they approaching businesses with an educational message in this instance and an enforcement message in another?

Outreach and education are already being done by Ramsey County's Bizrecycling Program staff who—because they are in the waste management business-- are in a position to demonstrate that recyclable and compostable packaging have a positive impact on a business' bottom line. Even then, they report that they have had to work with some businesses for months or years before they have been willing to make the change.

- DSI does not have routine contact with many of the organizations that should be encouraged to make changes in their packaging. Marketing themselves to a whole new class of customers with an educational product would take significantly more time than it would if they were reaching out to people they see in the normal course of their business.

- DSI has a full plate. In the near term, we are asking them to implement:
 - Inspections scheduling
 - Lean Urbanism
 - Menthol cigarette restrictions
 - Open for Business efforts
 - Septic systems ordinance amendments
 - Short term rental regulations
 - Skyway ordinance and policy changes

In addition, they are replacing their licensing data system to allow better online service, advancing their Project Facilitation Improvement Project and making a number of significant staff transitions in the wake of some high level retirements.

Obviously, if the proposed ordinance had been adopted, we would have expected the Department to do the work necessary to implement it with all the necessary education and outreach efforts. We were reasonably confident, however, that we would have secured an innovations grant from Ramsey County to support the additional staffing that would have been necessary. In the absence of that outside funding, asking them to take on a major new initiative that will take staff from other critical priorities is not a wise use of limited resources.

Ultimately, if this resolution is allowed to take effect without my signature, this will be a discussion you will have—and a resource allocation decision you will make--with my successor. Whatever happens, I hope you give serious consideration to bringing the proposed ordinance back for further consideration, making any changes you think necessary to address concerns raised during the public hearing. That, at the end of the day, will be what moves the City toward the goals we share.

Sincerely,



Christopher B. Coleman
Mayor