



## **MINNESOTA GROCERS ASSOCIATION**

1360 Energy Park Drive, Suite 110 • St. Paul, MN 55108 • 651-228-0973 • 1-800-966-8352 • [mga@mngrocers.com](mailto:mga@mngrocers.com)

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Chair Putnam and Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Veterans, Broadband, and Rural Development:

On behalf of the Minnesota Grocers Association (MGA), thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns regarding SF188 (Gustafson), which would require food manufacturers to test every packaged food product for ortho-phthalate levels before distribution in Minnesota.

While we support efforts to reduce the presence of potentially harmful chemicals like ortho-phthalates in food packaging, we believe SF188 takes an overly burdensome approach. This proposal could have far-reaching negative impacts on Minnesota's food supply chain and lead to increased costs for consumers.

Minnesota is proudly home to one of the strongest networks of independent, locally owned, and multi-generational grocery and convenience stores in the nation. For over 125 years, MGA has represented Minnesota's food industry, which includes more than 300 companies and over 1,300 locations statewide—from producers and manufacturers to wholesalers and retailers. Our industry supports more than 150,000 union and non-union jobs across the state.

SF188 would require testing of all packaged food, regardless of whether it has come into contact with phthalates—an extremely costly and logistically challenging mandate. This regulation would hit small and mid-sized producers and retailers hardest. While large national chains like Walmart are able to spread the added expense among their vast network, smaller businesses would be forced to pass those costs directly onto consumers. These continued mandates only accelerate market consolidation and reduce competition, further strengthening the position of large retailers at the expense of local businesses.

Additionally, SF188 goes beyond the existing federal framework established by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which already regulates food packaging materials and conducts ongoing safety assessments. The FDA's evidence-based, national standards ensure a uniform approach to food safety. Creating separate state-level requirements would disrupt that uniformity and put Minnesota out of step with the rest of the country.

In closing, while we fully support efforts to reduce exposure to harmful chemicals and protect public health, SF188 is not a practical solution. It would impose significant costs and hurt Minnesota's food system and status and a world-leading food producer. We respectfully urge the Committee to consider alternative, balanced solutions that protect consumers without placing unnecessary burdens on our food manufacturers and the communities they serve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Steve Barthel  
Director of Government Relations  
Minnesota Grocers Association