



Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee
Minnesota Senate Office Building
Saint Paul Minnesota 55155

March 11, 2025

Dear Chair Klein and Members of the Minnesota Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee,

At North Star Prosperity, economic freedom and consumer protection go hand in hand in building strong communities and a thriving Minnesota. As Minnesotans, we value fair and transparent commerce. But right now, a significant consumer protection issue is being ignored: the exorbitant and often exploitative pricing of water at entertainment events.

Let's be clear: this isn't about luxury items. It's about a basic human necessity. Minnesotans attending concerts, festivals, and other large gatherings are routinely forced to pay inflated prices for water, or face dehydration. This is a clear case of price gouging, especially during hot summer months when the risk of dehydration is significantly heightened.

Imagine a family attending a summer festival. They've already paid for tickets, parking, and perhaps food. Now, they're faced with \$6 water bottles, or the risk of their children becoming dehydrated. This isn't a choice, it's a forced expense. This is a consumer protection issue.

Studies show that nearly one-third of festival-goers experience dehydration. This isn't just an inconvenience; it's a health risk, particularly for vulnerable populations like seniors and those with chronic conditions. The current system allows venues to capitalize on this risk, essentially holding consumers hostage.

This is not a free market. This is exploitation.

SF 1910 directly addresses this consumer protection failure. It ensures that venues provide access to potable water through reasonable means: free bottled water, allowing attendees to bring their own, or water filling stations. This bill isn't about imposing undue burdens; it's about ensuring fair access to a basic necessity.

Here's why SF 1910 is crucial for Minnesota consumers:

- **Combats Price Gouging:** It prevents venues from exploiting consumers by charging excessive prices for water, especially during times of increased risk.
- **Protects Consumer Health:** It ensures access to hydration, preventing dehydration and related health emergencies.



- **Promotes Fair Commerce:** It creates a level playing field, preventing venues from unfairly profiting from a basic need. Notably, venues like First Avenue demonstrate that providing free water is not only possible, but a customer-friendly practice that builds goodwill and loyalty.
- **Upholds Consumer Expectations:** Minnesotans expect fair pricing and access to basic necessities at public events.

The 2023 'Taste of Minnesota' event serves as a pertinent example of the consumer protection concerns at hand. On one of the hottest days of the year, with a heat advisory in effect, organizers initially prohibited attendees from bringing in their own water bottles, citing standard festival policy. Attendees voiced significant concerns about the lack of readily available water and the absence of public refill stations. It wasn't until public outcry, combined with intervention from the City of Minneapolis who installed free water filling stations, and donations from Target and the fire department, that the policy was reversed. This incident vividly illustrates the potential danger of restricting water access, especially during extreme heat, and underscores the public's expectation for reasonable consumer protection.

This bill isn't about restricting economic freedom. It's about ensuring that economic freedom doesn't come at the expense of consumer protection. It's about ensuring that Minnesota consumers are not being taken advantage of.

Please, stand with Minnesota consumers and support SF 1910. Let's send a clear message that in our state, consumer protection is a priority.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Dean". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

North Star Prosperity