



February 17, 2021

Chairman Zack Stephenson
House Commerce Committee
509 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chairman Stephenson:

The Minnesota Trucking Association (MTA) submits this letter in opposition to House File 600. As a statewide safety organization, the MTA believes HF600 will reduce highway safety and exacerbate an existing shortage of professional truck drivers.

Impaired driving remains a serious issue despite gains over the past three decades. Data released by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety found that a majority of the 27,975 motorists cited for driving while impaired in 2019 were alcohol related. But perhaps more concerning was the growing number—a 5% increase from 2018—in the number of drivers arrested for being impaired by cannabis, opioids and methamphetamines. We believe that statistic will increase dramatically if the recreational use of marijuana is legalized statewide.

According to the National Institutes of Health, marijuana use significantly impairs judgment, motor coordination and reaction time. When you consider that a tractor-trailer traveling at 65 MPH requires the length of two football fields to come to a complete stop, our grave concerns are understandable. Studies have found drivers with THC in their blood are twice as likely to cause a fatal accident as drivers who have not used drugs or alcohol.

Trucking companies follow current U.S. Department of Transportation standards for mandatory alcohol and controlled drug testing for our employees. While reliable tests exist to determine alcohol and drug use, there is no enforceable national impairment standard for marijuana.

Fleets – and their insurance carriers - employ a zero-tolerance policy to driving while impaired. Drivers testing positive for recreational marijuana will simply be unemployable by the trucking industry, worsening an existing truck driver shortage. In 2018, the trucking industry nationally was short roughly 60,800 drivers, which was up nearly 20% from 2017's figure of 50,700. If current trends hold, the shortage could swell to over 160,000 by 2028

We urge the committee vote no on House File 600.

Respectfully,


John Hausladen
President

Cc: House Commerce Committee Members