



## MINNESOTA GROCERS ASSOCIATION

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February 28, 2023

Dear Chair Vang and members of the House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee,

The Minnesota Grocers Association thanks you for the opportunity to express our support of HF1981, which increases funding to the Good Food Access Program (GFAP). The Minnesota Grocers Association is the only state trade association representing the food industry of Minnesota from farm to fork. We are tasked to support and represent industry while advancing the common good of our great state.

The Good Food Access Program (GFAP) Equipment and Physical Improvement Grant increases the access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods (including fruits and vegetables) for underserved communities in low-and moderate-income areas. Grants help grocery stores and small food retailers make physical improvements and purchase equipment to stimulate sales of such foods. The Minnesota Grocers Association holds a position on the Good Food Access Program Advisory Committee and have seen firsthand the positive outcomes of the program.

Since 2016, the GFAP has enable dozens of projects around the state and increased the availability of nutritious foods to thousands of Minnesotans. This new investment, in a proven program, would expand access to even more of our friends and neighbors in disproportionately affected areas.

The changes happening in today's food industry are enormous. Market innovations continue to expand. Offerings like delivery, curbside, and personal shopping are becoming more popular. The addition of these new customer services also creates constant challenges for our members. To succeed in today's market, you must answer customers' expectations. This can be particularly challenging for smaller, locally owned retailers who may not have the technology, staff, or facilities available to swiftly adjust to market demands. Some communities are losing their local grocer, and we know that when a grocer leaves the community, main street suffers. That is why it is critically important, to expand funding to the Good Food Access Fund, and that a portion of the funds are commitment specifically to expanding the strength of existing brick and mortar locations.

We know that the challenges facing industry and consumers are real. Regulatory burdens are front and center, staffing shortages, increased operation costs, and competitive pressure weigh heavy on every operator. We appreciate the intent of this legislation, and are incredibly proud to have a place at the table for these important conversations. We are committed to supporting underserved communities, and the best way to accomplish this goal is by supporting local retailers.

Sincerely,

Jamie Pfuhl  
President  
Minnesota Grocers Association

*The Minnesota Grocers Association is the only state trade association representing the food industry of Minnesota from farm to fork. Minnesota has a unique culture of hundreds of hometown grocers and convenience stores, many of whom are independent, multigenerational, and locally owned. The MGA is their state trade association, with over 125 years of advancing industry. We have over 300 members with over 1,300 locations statewide, as well as food producers, manufacturers, brokers, and wholesaler members. Our industry provides both union and non-union. The MGA is tasked to support and represent industry while advancing the common good of our great state.*