

Proposal for a Minnesota Advisory Board to Combat Organized Retail and Supply Chain Crime

Organized Retail and Supply Chain Crime Is Impacting Minnesota Communities

Organized retail and supply chain crime is not isolated—it is coordinated, sophisticated, and growing. Retailers, transporters, warehouses, and suppliers across Minnesota are experiencing the effects of organized theft enterprises that disrupt operations, endanger workers, and drive up costs for consumers.

Minnesota took an important step in 2023 by defining organized retail crime in statute. That framework helped establish the problem. But today, the challenge is execution. The complexity of these criminal networks—often operating across jurisdictions and industries—creates real barriers to identifying patterns, building cases, and shutting down repeat offenders. As a result, many organized theft operations continue to evade enforcement or face delayed intervention.

The data reinforces what businesses are experiencing on the ground. Minnesota ranks #10 nationally in retail theft, with incidents occurring at a rate 10% higher than expected based on population. At the same time, cargo theft and supply chain fraud are increasing, with criminals using tactics like fake identities and fraudulent trucking operations to steal goods before they ever reach store shelves.

Click to watch a KARE-11 story discussing crimes in the supply chain (strategic cargo theft): <https://www.kare11.com/article/news/local/fake-identities-and-real-trucks-how-criminals-stealing-billions-of-dollars-in-cargo/89-a8d963ca-e2f2-406a-af3b-ccb2bf9b6805>

Organized theft is not just a retail and supply chain issue—it is a public safety and economic issue. These criminal enterprises often fund and enable broader illegal activity, including:

- Human trafficking
- Drug trafficking
- Violent crime
- International criminal networks

This is a system of crime that requires a system-level response.

Other States Are Taking Coordinated Action

Minnesota is not alone in facing this challenge—but other states are moving more aggressively to address it.

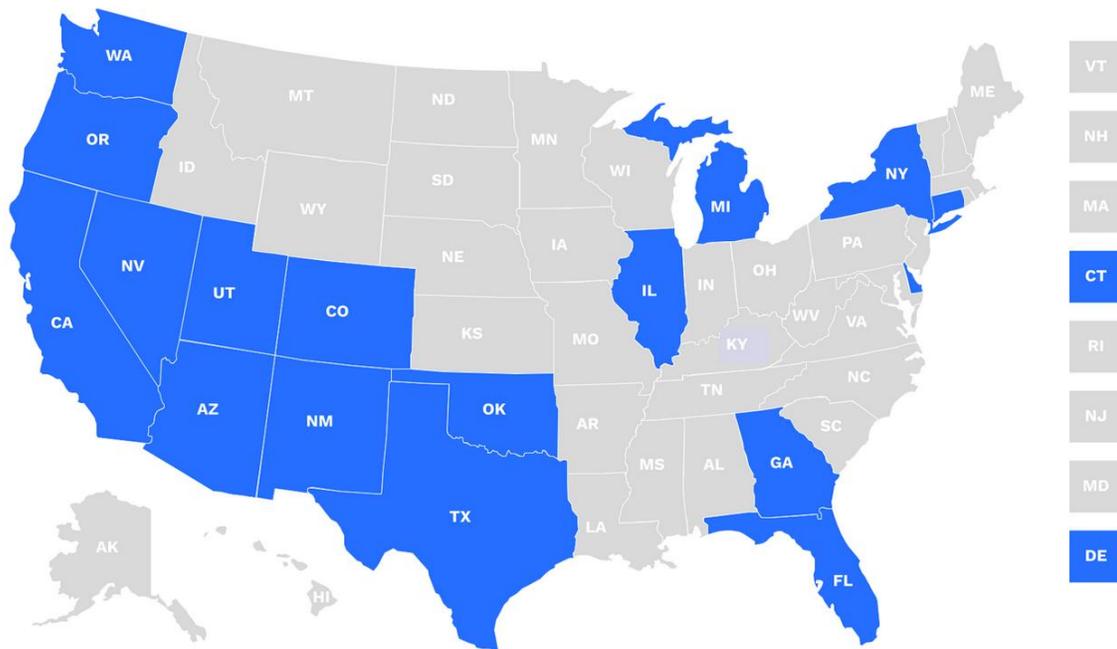
Seventeen states have established organized retail crime task forces to coordinate efforts across law enforcement, prosecutors, and the private sector. These models recognize a key reality: organized theft cannot be effectively addressed within traditional, siloed enforcement structures.

- California operates a statewide task force through the Highway Patrol, deploying dedicated investigators and sharing intelligence across regions.
- Florida created a centralized crime exchange and database, allowing retailers and law enforcement to identify trends and connect cases in real time.
- Michigan built a joint effort between State Police and the Attorney General, including dedicated prosecutors and formal federal partnerships.

These approaches are producing results by aligning resources, improving information sharing, and focusing on enterprise-level crime—not just individual incidents.

Minnesota has the opportunity to build on these proven models.

States with ORC taskforces:



Source: MultiState Associates, May 2024.

Minnesota's Response: A Statewide Advisory Board and Coordination

To effectively address organized retail and supply chain crime, Minnesota needs a coordinated, statewide strategy with dedicated resources and clear accountability.

HF 2879 and SF 3290 establish that framework through the creation of an Organized Retail and Supply Chain Crime Advisory Board.

Purpose:

To strengthen Minnesota's ability to prevent, investigate, and prosecute organized theft by aligning law enforcement, prosecutors, and industry partners around a coordinated, statewide approach.

Core Functions

- **Collaboration Across Sectors**
Bring together state and federal agencies, local law enforcement, prosecutors, financial investigators, retailers, and supply chain partners to share intelligence and coordinate action.
- **Focused Enforcement and Prosecution**
Support the development of cases against organized theft enterprises, including coordination of dedicated prosecutorial resources and multi-jurisdictional investigations.
- **Training and Best Practices**
Equip law enforcement and stakeholders with specialized tools and training to identify and respond to organized theft activity.
- **Resource Alignment**
Provide funding support and coordination to ensure local agencies have the capacity to participate in complex, multi-agency investigations.

This is about moving from reactive enforcement to proactive disruption of organized criminal networks.

Minnesota Has a Proven Model to Build From

Minnesota does not need to start from scratch. The state already has a successful model for coordinated enforcement in the Minnesota Financial Crimes Task Force (MNFCTF).

Established in 2000, the MNFCTF brings together law enforcement, prosecutors, financial institutions, and businesses to address complex financial crimes such as identity theft and fraud. It operates across jurisdictions, shares expertise, and provides specialized training—exactly the type of structure needed to combat organized retail and supply chain crime.

The proposed advisory board builds from this model, applying it to a rapidly growing category of crime that now impacts the full consumer goods chain.

Broad Support Across the Supply Chain

HF 2879 (Witte/Norris) and SF 3290 (Latz/Limmer) are bipartisan efforts supported by a broad coalition of organizations representing the full spectrum of Minnesota's consumer economy—from transportation and logistics to labor and retail.

This alignment reflects a shared understanding: organized theft is not confined to one industry. It affects how goods move, how businesses operate, and how communities function.

Conclusion

Organized retail and supply chain crime is evolving—and Minnesota's response must evolve with it.

HF 2879 and SF 3290 provide a practical, proven path forward: a coordinated, statewide approach that brings together the right partners, focuses resources where they are most effective, and targets the criminal enterprises driving this activity.

This is about protecting Minnesota's communities, supporting workers, and ensuring a safe, reliable marketplace for consumers.