Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am John Hausladen, president of the Minnesota Trucking Association. We are a statewide safety organization representing 600 trucking companies and their allied vendors. I am here today to testify in opposition to HF100, a bill to legalize recreational cannabis.

We do acknowledge significant effort was put into crafting language that attempts to address the many concerns we have voiced. The very size of the bill, 300 pages, concedes that legalizing recreational cannabis creates a variety of known and unknown risks.

Based on our initial analysis, we believe the bill does not adequately address two of our major concerns: traffic safety and workforce availability.

As Minnesotans learned first-hand during the pandemic and subsequent supply chain disruptions, trucking is the lifeblood of our economy and quality of life. Everything spends some time on a truck. Food. Medicine. Cement. Consumer Electronics. If you got it a truck brought it.

Anything that slows down or stops the flow of goods will have a direct impact on Minnesota families and businesses. We believe legalizing recreational cannabis will have such a negative effect on freight movement.

First, legalizing recreational cannabis will make Minnesota roadways less safe, leading to more crashes, injuries and fatalities. Just look at Minnesota roadways right now. Speeds are up. Law enforcement is understaffed. And there is currently no reliable roadside test that law enforcement can use to assess impairment. How can putting more cannabis impaired drivers on the roadway make that situation better? The bill presumes consumers will refrain from driving when consuming cannabis. It is not true for alcohol and it won’t be true for cannabis.

• Since recreational marijuana was legalized in 2013, traffic deaths where drivers tested positive for marijuana increased 138% while all Colorado traffic deaths increased 29%. \*

• Since recreational marijuana was legalized, traffic deaths involving drivers who tested positive for marijuana more than doubled from 55 in 2013 to 131 people killed in 2020. \*

• Since recreational marijuana was legalized, the percentage of all Colorado traffic deaths involving drivers who tested positive for marijuana increased from 11% in 2013 to 20% in 2020.\*

While the human toll is paramount, a truck stopped due to a crash means some vital shipment is delayed, perhaps shutting down an assembly line or delaying a critical medical procedure.

Freight flow and the supply chain will be impacted.

Second, and equally important, is the negative impact on our workforce. Minnesota currently faces a shortage of nearly 8,000 professional truck drivers, while the national shortage is ten times that number. Per federal regulation, truck drivers are prohibited from driving while under the influence of any Schedule I drug. Truck drivers are subject to drug testing, including pre-hire testing, random testing, post-accident testing and return to work testing after completing a rehabilitation program. We appreciate the bill specifically acknowledges this reality in Article 9 under testing.

To be clear enacting HF100 into law will not make it legal for persons to consume cannabis and drive a commercial vehicle. However, it will raise the likelihood that persons will consume cannabis and generate a positive drug test due to confusion and misinformation. If they have a positive result, they will be relieved of duty … and the odds of that person ever driving again are low.

Let’s look farther down the road. A person who becomes a recreational user of cannabis under this law may not want to be a truck driver today. But in the future they may, and the cannabis lifestyle will make it nearly impossible for them to ever successfully pass a pre-employment drug test.

But does this really happen? Unfortunately, it does. Case in point, I have a member fleet with operations in Minnesota and Colorado. This member reports that their ability to recruit new drivers in Colorado has become significantly harder due to one issue: cannabis. The applicants simply can’t pass the preemployment drug test.

A long-term view suggests that our already significant driver shortage will only grow worse if this bill becomes law.

We will continue to offer our knowledge and expertise regarding the trucking-related components of this bill as it moves through the process, especially with regards to roadside testing and employer liability.

The best crafted bill can’t overcome the new traffic safety and workforce risks created by legalizing cannabis, and thus we urge you to vote no on HF 100.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I look forward to answering any questions.

\*https://www.prevention.org/Resources/0dbad5e3-9eba-4400-aa36-1f1b4e8b24b8/RMHIDTA-Marijuana-Report-2021.pdf