



ND Petroleum Marketers Association
ND Retail Association



Testimony- HB 1299
January 19, 2021- House IBL

Chairman Lefor and Members of the House IBL Committee:

For the record I'm Mike Rud, President of the North Dakota Petroleum Marketers and Retail Associations. On behalf of well over 1,000 retail store fronts making up our membership, I urge a **"DO NOT PASS" recommendation on HB 1299.**

Our membership cannot see a need whatsoever for a bill of this kind. Government has no place telling a retailer what type of payment it can or can't accept. If ever we saw the potential for an opportunity to get the camel's nose under the tent and let government way too deep into the operations of a personal business, HB 1299 would be it. This is truly a slippery slope. Today what type of payment method a retailer can or can't accept-- Tomorrow, it could be more government influence over what kind of products a retailer can or can't sell.

All this talk has surfaced due to the pandemic and discussions over touchless payment methods. Yes, because of the pandemic, we may have seen a few businesses decide not to take cash in the short term. We also saw a coin shortage due to the pandemic, but the American currency is still flowing through all the retail shops I've frequented or have been discussing business concerns with during this ongoing crisis. It appears only a few ND businesses have gone strictly to credit cards as a payment option. Whether you agree or not, that's still their right.

A national retail survey I saw pointed out despite all the growth in the multiple forms of payment systems, nearly 55% of the consumers polled said cash was still their chosen method of payment.

In a rural state like ND, any retailer not accepting cash is very aware of the fact it might cost them some sales because of the conservative nature of the ND consumer. People will shop elsewhere if their chosen payment method isn't accepted. The North Dakota retailer is well aware of this fact—Cash is still King. I can also tell you many ND businesses would much rather accept cash than continue to pay the 2.5-3.5% transaction fees charged by the credit card companies for every credit card sale run through a retail till.

To date, I can say our association office has not received any complaints from disgruntled customers regarding the payment methods being used by ND retailers. NDPMA/NDRA believe HB 1299 is a solution in search of a problem—government interference in business.

Again, NDPMA/NDRA asks for a “DO NOT PASS” recommendation on HB 1299.