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Chairman Klein, and Members of the Industry, Business, and Labor committee

RE: HB 1175

The North Dakota Grocers Association (NDGA) represents the retail grocers, suppliers, and wholesalers in North Dakota. Our membership includes over 125 grocers and over 80 vendors/suppliers located throughout our state. NDGA supports passage of HB 1175.

Last spring COVID-19 drastically changed our industry. We were designated as “essential businesses” which required us to stay open to serve the needs of the public. Our industry like many others were not prepared to completely change to a new retail environment. State and Federal guidelines were confusing and many times conflicting with each other. The rules would change week to week and sometimes day to day. Our employees and customers were concerned about their safety, our vendor supply chains were stretched to the point that many items were out of stock. NDGA along with the National Grocers Association immediately started to sort through the volumes of guidelines from the CDC and our North Dakota state agencies. Materials were developed and sent to members so that they could use “best practices” to help control the spread of the virus. Slowly our efforts paid off and employees and customers came to trust that we were doing all we could to safely stay open and provide for our customers.

HB 1175 COVID-19 Liability Protection is legislation that recognizes the unique circumstances of the pandemic. Its provision of protecting businesses and industries, that were tasked with staying open, from unwarranted lawsuits recognizes the efforts businesses made to provide needed goods and services.

NDGA request that the ND Senate -Industry, Business, and Labor committee vote DO PASS on HB 1175.

Thank you

John Dyste

President

North Dakota Grocers Association