

Testimony- HB 1628
September 1, 2026
ND Legislative Special Session

Chairman and Members of the 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 PASS” recommendation on HB 1628.**

The Retail community has a long history of stepping up when called upon to tackle serious issues like Kratom.

To be fair, I was a bit concerned when I heard this product defined as gas station heroin. I found the statement to be extremely offensive since I didn't know of many of our members knowingly engaged in the sale of Kratom infused products. I do know I never received many calls from retailers when the Governor issued the Kratom ban.

One of my board members summed it up best last week when he said good, ethical business owners should not have to sell questionable products to keep the doors open. They should have the common decency to do the right thing for their customers and society in general.

Bottom line, the folks serving on our association boards voted unanimously for a complete ban on Kratom sales in ND.

Our members believe there are plenty of legitimate products available that a doctor can prescribe to help patients with opioid addictions.

Our membership believes allowing retail sales just gives the camel's nose a chance to get under the tent. There will always be bad actors out there in the market just trying to make an extra dollar. The old saying a couple of bad apples can spoil the bunch might apply here.

NDPMA/NDRA believe one unfortunate sales incident risks giving the entire retail industry a black eye that might take a real long time to heal.

Hopefully, Section 2 of this bill will have enough teeth in it to ensure the right people are selling legitimate products and if they aren't, then financial penalties to retail violators should cause some serious pain.

The ND DOT has its Vision Zero goal for state highway fatalities. Why can't we match that effort when it comes to Kratom sales in ND. Other states have. Let's join that list.

Again, NDPMA/NDRA asks for a “DO PASS” recommendation on HB 1628.