



March 7, 2019

Members of the House Judiciary Finance and Civil Law Division:

Minnesota's retailers and our members are arguably the strongest government partner when it comes to keeping tobacco out of the hands of minors, and through this partnership Minnesota continues to be nation-leading in denying sales to underage youth.

As you consider increasing the tobacco sales age to 21 in HF 331, we offer the following considerations:

- Raising the sales age in Minnesota will have an impact on border community economies, retailers, jobs and tax dollars as sales of some tobacco products AND accompanying purchases such as beverages, food and gasoline will move to neighboring communities in other states. The reality for retailers is that a change in the sales age impacts many other sales.
- Retailers question raising the sales age without a corresponding increase in the age to consume. Changing the sales age without addressing consumption feels like a policy that simply creates economic harm to retailers absent the direct step of discouraging use.
- Penalty increases in the bill are steep. Current penalties are already a deterrent to mistakes and errors and the significant increase will likely do little to change the behaviors of those conscientiously breaking the law.
- If Minnesota moves the sales age to 21, we should adopt statewide tobacco product treatment continuity. Doing so would put tobacco products on par with how alcohol is treated in Minnesota.

We appreciate a recognition in the bill related to those who furnish tobacco to minors. Frequently social sources (family, friends, acquaintances) are identified by youth as their access point for tobacco. Including a deterrence to those who furnish tobacco to minors is an important step in the recognition that there is a need to address social sources as a common access point.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments to the Committee. Retailers look forward to continuing our strong compliance partnership.

Sincerely,

Lance Klatt, Minnesota Service Station & Convenience Store Association

Bruce Nustad, Minnesota Retailers Association

Jamie Pfuhl, Minnesota Grocers Association

Tim Gross, Minnesota Petroleum Marketers Association