

THE OGA VOICE

OGA is composed of over 300 food retailers, wholesalers and supply companies across the Buckeye state. OGA members range from the largest chain stores to the smallest “mom and pop” independent grocers as well as some convenience stores and of course the food wholesalers who supply these stores.

THE OGA IMPACT

At our last market study, these facts show impact:

- **Ohio's grocery industry employs over 110,000 people** in full- and part-time jobs.
- **Ohio grocers generated over \$18.5 billion in sales, paid over \$2.3 billion in wages, and paid \$1.1 billion in state and federal taxes.**
- Ohio's grocery and food industry are generous donors to food banks, churches, synagogues, little league teams and schools across Ohio.

Ultimately, Ohioans not only depend on grocers as distributors of their food supply, but also as employers and taxpayers.

INFORMATION

Please contact **OGA President, Kristin Mullins** at 614-442-5511 or kristin@ohiogrocers.org.

THE OHIO GROCERS ASSOCIATION **OHIO STATEHOUSE DAY**

May 8th, 2019 • Ohio Statehouse



ISSUES & INFORMATION

Our Mission is to be the leading voice and advocate for Ohio's Food Industry

OUR TOP ISSUES ARE DETAILED INSIDE.

OGA would also be happy to facilitate any store or warehouse tours anytime.

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The Ohio state flag icon, featuring a red triangle, a white triangle, and a blue triangle with a white circle in the center.

Tobacco 21 – Operating Budget:

The Ohio Grocers Association urges lawmakers to implement statewide tobacco policy.

Establishing statewide and uniform age of purchase requirements for tobacco products is crucial for providing retailers the consistency in operating their businesses. Many of our municipalities across the state have already raised the age of purchase for tobacco products from 18 to 21. As a matter of public health, the time is right for the state to enact statewide policy.

Many OGA members operate across multiple municipalities and varying rules and regulations relating to licensing fees would be a logistical and management nightmare. Overburdensome and varying licensing fees limit our members' ability to effectively operate their stores – and in the most challenged of demographics - could even result in store closures.

It is imperative the state be the leader in setting or imposing any standards and requirements regarding tobacco products and having language to establish this would protect businesses from having to implement different or additional fees from one municipality to the next.

OUR ASK: Please support language in the operating budget that would raise the age of purchase for tobacco products to 21 and establish uniform statewide standards.



Healthy Food for Ohio Program (HFFO):

OGA urges lawmakers for increased funds for the Healthy Food for Ohio Program.

OGA and our advocacy partners are requesting an expansion of the Healthy Food for Ohio program, which is administered by statewide non-profit community development lender Finance Fund Capital Corporation to address financial hurdles faced by Ohio's food retailers. Healthy Food for Ohio is a public-private partnership that provides blended grant and loan dollars to grocers to develop new or renovate existing fresh food retail in underserved communities throughout Ohio. The program helps overcome funding gaps and barriers faced by operators in low-income areas and will help finance costs and fill credit needs not typically addressed by traditional financial institutions. Retailers supported through the program help meet the needs

of communities for fresh, affordable food and quality employment opportunities, helping improve health outcomes and generate economic development across Ohio.

OUR ASK: \$5 million across the FY20-21 Budget to



Hemp Farming and Decriminalization Legislation – Senate Bill 57:

The Ohio Grocers Association supports language that would create a hemp farming program and legalize the sale of hemp and hemp products in Ohio.

OGA members sell a variety of consumer goods and products at their stores and are always looking to diversify their portfolio with new and innovative opportunities. Those include your run of the mill food items but also new and emerging products like hemp products including hemp-derived cannabidiol (CBD). The 2018 Farm Bill permanently removed hemp from the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) making hemp an agricultural commodity and redefining hemp products like CBD so that they are not under the purview of the CSA.

In lieu of this and because Ohio law does provide exceptions for the sale of products that are excluded from federal drug control laws like hemp-derived CBD, many retailers sold these hemp products at their retail locations. However, in August of 2018, the Ohio Board of Pharmacy issued a policy FAQ that states that CBD products, whether derived from hemp or marijuana, can only be distributed through Ohio's medical marijuana dispensaries because hemp is included in the definition of marijuana under Ohio law. This has led to enforcement concerns and confusion among retailers and in select cases, thousands of dollars' worth of hemp products being embargoed by the State.

It is imperative we act now to clarify the Ohio Revised Code to bring Ohio law up to date with our neighboring states where hemp-derived products are sold legally every day so that Ohio retailers can compete and utilize this emerging market.

OUR ASK: Please support Senate Bill 57.



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