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**Senate Bill 326**

**Written Interested Party Testimony**

**Senate General Government Committee**

**December 3, 2024**

Chair Wilkin, Vice-Chair Reineke, Ranking Member DeMora, and members of the Senate General Government Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments on Senate Bill 326, legislation that seeks to ban intoxicating hemp products.

By way of background, as President of the Ohio Grocers Association I proudly represent over 500 food retail, wholesale, and supply companies across the Buckeye state. My 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.

We share the Senate’s concerns on making sure intoxicating products are kept out of the hands of our children. Our members have extensive experience and take the responsibility of selling a wide range of adult products to consumers on a daily basis. There are rigid protocols and enforcement mechanisms to ensure that any adult use product is only sold to an age-appropriate consumer. However, we have concerns that the language in SB326 would ban most hemp products from retail sales and driving them to an unsafe, illicit environment with no age restrictions.

We instead urge the Senate and welcome an approach that addresses youth access by incorporating strict regulatory oversight. These include components such as age-restricting products; product labeling and rigid testing procedures; and other regulatory requirements. We believe this is the best approach to not harm legitimate Ohio businesses, like grocery stores, while maintaining proper limitations and safety measures.

We are encouraged by recent dialogue with the Senate on considering and shifting to a regulatory framework and we look forward to continuing to work with the Legislature on this legislation moving forward.

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