



frontline

The Official Monthly Publication of the Minnesota Grocers Association

March 2024

2024 Session – Off to a Fast Start...Again

The legislature opened the 2024 session on February 12 and didn't waste any time in continuing the torrid pace that was set in 2023. As of writing, lawmakers have introduced over 1,600 new bills. These bills bring the number of individual pieces of legislation to a staggering over 8,300 for this biennium, already shattering the previous record which was set in 2019-20. So, not only are these new pieces of legislation on the table, but all of last year's bills are still viable for advancement. Committees began holding hearings on their top-tier issues including a fix to the 2023 tax bill that would have accidentally increased taxes by \$352 million dollars for most Minnesota filers using the standard deduction.

Just days before the start of session, there was a change in leadership. Senator Erin Murphy (DFL - St. Paul) was elected by her caucus members to serve as the new Senate Majority Leader. Out-going Senate Majority Leader, Kari Dziejcz (DFL - Minneapolis), stepped down to focus on her health. The MGA Government Relations Team's thoughts are with her as she continues her fight.

As anticipated, the environment and labor committees have been busy hearing several impactful pieces of legislation. In environment, these include an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), drafting a bottle deposit/takeback bill, and a repeal of the current state law that prohibits cities from banning single use bags.

These proposals would be extremely disruptive to the entire food industry while being costly for consumers and retailers. They add a complex layer to a recycling system that has proven results.

Labor proposals include adjustments to the previously passed Earned Sick and Safe time (ESST) and Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML) mandates, minimum wage changes, recordkeeping requirements, employee cannabis testing provisions, and a "Retail Worker and Consumer Safety Violence Prevention Act". The Commerce Committees have introduced potential changes to liquor laws (including a bill to allow the sale of full-strength beer in grocery and convenience stores), adjustments to the legalization of adult-use cannabis, and price gouging. On a positive note, the Vendor Collection Allowance bill was introduced. This bill allows retailers to keep a small portion of the sales tax that they remit to the state.

The shortened length of session will certainly mean another faced-paced session where bills move quickly and debate is limited. The MGA Government Relations team is focused on advocating on all relevant issues that are critical for industry. For a successful session, the MGA will need engagement from all members. Hearing your concerns and challenges helps us paint an accurate picture for leaders. Stay tuned for ways to support our collective efforts and answer the call if you receive it. **SB**

Thank You 2024 Legislative Sponsors



Becoming an MGA Legislative Sponsor supports our efforts in advocating for industry in St. Paul. A legislative sponsorship is an investment in your business. Due to the support of our legislative sponsors, the MGA Government Relations team was recently able to purchase a new bill-tracking system that will be extremely valuable in our work and will be a benefit to the entire industry. This is one way that your sponsorship dollars go to work for you. Sponsors receive recognition throughout the year in all of our legislative updates, publications, and events. See insert. **SB**

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Willie's SuperValu
Zup's Food Market

Capitol Checkouts Calls - Connect to the Capitol

Stay up to date on the information from the 2024 legislative session by joining us for our bi-weekly Capitol Checkout Calls. The MGA Government Relations Team invites you to join us for a discussion on the latest news from St. Paul. Our next call will be held on **March 15 at 9:00 am**. These exclusive members-only conference calls last up to 30 minutes and give you pertinent, up-to-the-minute legislative information that will impact your bottom line. These calls are recorded to easily share with your team members. **SB**

2024 Membership Renewals



Last call for 2024 membership renewals. The MGA membership runs on a calendar year and all expired on 12/31/2023. Please submit today to continue receiving all the cost-saving benefits. **KA**



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The Minnesota Grocers Association, 1360 Energy Park Drive, Suite #110, St. Paul, MN 55108, 651-228-0973 or 1-800-966-8352, Fax 651-228-1949.

Nominations Open for MGA Awards

The MGA is now accepting nominations for our 2024 Outstanding Grocer and Outstanding Vendor. These MGA awards honor those in the industry who have demonstrated excellence, made significant contributions to the industry, and are respected by their peers. This is a tremendous honor and a wonderful tradition at the MGA. The awards will be presented on **Sunday, July 28** at MGA's Annual Conference. Please see the insert to submit your nominations, which are due no later than **April 5. KA**

2024 MGA Champions Luncheon

Join us on **April 16** for the MGA Champions Luncheon. This program is a unique concept that extends invitations to the entire MGA membership to provide valuable networking opportunities to all retail, wholesale, and allied companies. In addition to networking, attendees will gain valuable knowledge during the keynote on topical industry trends and how to thrive in their business endeavors.

This program highlights the successes and congratulates the winners of the 2023 Bag Hunger Campaign and the 2023 – 2024 Minnesota Grown Retailer of the Year Contest. This is a not-to-be-missed event! See insert. **ST**

MGA Online Checkout

The MGA's Online Checkout series consists of topical and relevant information from regulatory compliance to industry trends critical to your everyday operations. This is an exclusive member-only benefit. Be sure to register for the next webinars.



Join the MGA on **Friday, March 15 at 10:00 am** and the new Director of the Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML) Division who will give an update on the progress of the implementation of the new PFML program. Register today at <https://bit.ly/MGAOnlineCheckout>.

Join the MGA on **Tuesday, March 26 at 9:00 am** to discuss the results of the Federal Reserve of Minneapolis's recent economic survey with Regional Outreach Director, Ron Wirtz. He will discuss how businesses are dealing with challenging conditions. **KA**

MGAF Carts to Careers: Elevate Your Workforce

The MGAF Carts to Careers (CTC) tuition support program application process is continuing for the Retail Management Certificate program run by Alexandria Technical & Community College. If you have employees interested in furthering their careers within the food industry, the application deadline for Summer Semester I (starts May 13) is **April 23**. Sign up at https://bit.ly/MGA_CTC. **KC**



MGA Foundation Scholarships

Make sure your employees take advantage of the 2024 Minnesota Grocers Association Foundation (MGAF) Scholarship Program that runs from **January 15 – March 15**. The MGAF will be awarding 25 - \$2,000 scholarships this year. Additional information can be found on the MGA website at www.mngrocers.com. **ST**



2024 MGA Foundation Golf Event & Scholarship Fundraiser

Spring is almost here and the MGA's Annual Golf Event is approaching! Register today and join us on **Tuesday, May 28** at The Refuge Golf Club. This event is brought to you in partnership with the MGA Vendor Leadership Committee.



The golf event is the sole fundraiser for the MGA Foundation Scholarship program, which provides scholarship opportunities for your employees and their dependents. See insert. **ST**

2024 Session Framework



2024 Introductions - Start of Session until Adjournment

Bills are introduced and begin to move through the process.

February Forecast – End of February

The Minnesota Management and Budget will release the state budget forecast for the FY 2025-26 and 2027-28. This will be the number the legislature will use to set any supplemental budget. Governor Walz will release his recommendations for a supplemental budget following the February forecast.

Committee Deadlines

March 22: Committees in both bodies must act favorably on bills that are not major appropriation or finance bills.

April 19: Committees in both bodies must act favorably on major appropriation and finance bills.

Conference Committees

Omnibus bills will be assembled, passed by each chamber, then sent to joint Conference Committees.

Constitutionally Required Adjournment – May 20

The Minnesota Legislature is constitutionally required to adjourn for the year on May 20.

Food PAC of MN

All 134 seats in the MN House of Representatives will be up for election this fall. This will be the only opportunity to RESTORE BALANCE to St. Paul until 2026.

Because of the importance of this election cycle, we've raised our fundraising goal to **\$45,000 for 2024**. We need your continued support more than ever. Every dollar you contribute is used to advance industry and is vital to the work of the MGA Government Relations team. See insert. **SB**



Sales Tax Updates

Beginning April 1, 2024, the following new local sales and use taxes will go into effect. **SB**

- Bloomington Sales and Use Tax 0.5%
- Golden Valley Sales and Use Tax 1.25%
- Polk County Transit Sales and Use Tax 0.5%
- St. Paul Sales and Use Tax 1.5%

WASHINGTON NEWS

President Biden Attacks Grocery Industry

President Joe Biden recently echoed a familiar campaign refrain in a speech in South Carolina saying “there are still too many corporations in America ripping people off: price gouging, junk fees, greedflation, shrinkflation.” His aides hinted these comments are a preview of more pressure Biden plans to levy against large grocery chains. Biden’s blame of the grocery industry for higher food prices is a false-confirmation to consumers who believe independent grocers are to blame for higher prices despite recent studies showing increasing margin pressures on independents in the face of higher overhead costs. The MGA continues to educate on industry realities and address day-to-day challenges.

MGA Signs SNAP Choice Letter to Protect Families’ Food Choice

The MGA joined a letter as a member of the SNAP Choice Coalition to protect food choice in the SNAP program so participants can continue to choose the grocery items that work best for their families. The letter was in opposition of language in the House Agriculture Appropriations bill that would require pilot projects to test restricting SNAP purchases to only specific “nutrient dense” items.

Credit Card Competition Act Update

U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee and Senator Roger Marshall (R-KS) announced two new co-sponsors to the Credit Card Competition Act: Senators Josh Hawley (R-MO) and Jack Reed (D-RI). The pair joins Senators Peter Welch (D-VT) and J.D. Vance (R-OH) in support of the Durbin-Marshall legislation that would enhance competition and choice in the credit card network market. The bipartisan “Credit Card Competition Act” (S. 1838/H.R. 3881) was introduced to bring competition to the credit card network routing market. Under the legislation, a credit card would be required to have more than one network option on which to route financial data.

Visa/Mastercard Interchange Settlement Information

A settlement was recently reached for the class action lawsuit alleging that Visa and Mastercard, individually, and together with their respective member banks, violated the antitrust laws. If your company accepted Visa or Mastercard credit or debit cards between January 1, 2004 and January 25, 2019, you are eligible. Under the settlement, Visa, Mastercard and the Bank Defendants have agreed to provide \$5.54 billion to merchants. Millions of businesses are eligible and the claims process is now open. Claim Forms have been mailed, and the application process is simple. For more information on the settlement or to find assistance on filing a claim visit www.paymentcardsettlement.com. The deadline to file a claim is May 31, 2024.

USDA Invests in Composting and Food Waste Diversion Projects

The USDA announced the investment of \$11.5 million in 38 cooperative agreements in 23 states that support projects to reduce and divert food waste from landfills and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Composting and Food Waste Reduction (CFWR) cooperative agreements is jointly administered by USDA’s Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). These 38 cooperative agreement projects will be implemented starting now until 2026.

Certified Food Manager & Recertification Training

New online certification and recertification course dates, available from Safe Food Training, have been updated for 2024. With numerous locations and classes available, it has never been easier to meet the state requirements. Visit <https://www.mngrocers.com/members/training> to sign up. **ST**

MGA Advertising - Get Noticed

There is still space available to advertise in the MGA 2024 Member Directory. This publication is the exclusive listing of the entire MGA membership and includes contact information for member stores and vendor members, along with key legislative information. This is a great opportunity to get your company front and center and showcase your commitment to the food industry of Minnesota. Space is limited – get your spot today. **KA**



**2024 MGA
ANNUAL CONFERENCE
JULY 28-30, 2024
MADDEN'S RESORT,
BRainerd, MN**

Get ready for the 2024 MGA Annual Conference – the largest and only event focused on the entire Minnesota food industry. This conference brings together the top retail decision-makers, who represent the broad spectrum of the state’s food industry, to meet with leading supplier companies for a one-of-a-kind event.

Don’t miss out – there is still plenty of time to sponsor this year’s conference. Sponsoring the Annual Conference elevates your company and shows your commitment to the food industry of Minnesota. **KA**

Thank You Survival Kit Sponsors

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**as of 2/15/2024*



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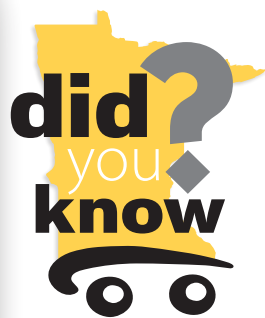
January 15 – March 15
MGAF Scholarship Program
MGA Program

March 5
MGA Legislative Day
St. Paul, MN
MGA Program

March 10 – 12
NGA Conference and Best
Bagger Competition
Las Vegas, NV

April 16
MGA Champions Luncheon
Eagan, MN
MGA Program

May 28
MGA Foundation Golf Event
Oak Grove, MN
MGA Program



The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for the 2024 Good Food Access Program (GFAP) Grants: The GFAP Equipment and Physical Improvement Grant and the GFAP Technical Assistance Grant. The agency will award up to \$935,000 between the two programs in this funding cycle. Visit <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/gfapequipmentgrant>.



You Asked it

Q: How can I get more involved or share my thoughts with the MGA Board of Directors?

A: The MGA Board of Directors is holding its annual retreat in early April. Please submit feedback, a concern, or an issue that you would like the Board of Directors to address at the strategic planning meeting at <https://bit.ly/MGAFeedback>. Remember, the MGA is a member-driven association and your input is valued. **JP**

Questions? Call MGA 1-800-966-8352



DISCLAIMER: This information is provided by MGA as a service to its members. This information does not constitute legal advice. As legal advice must be tailored to the specific circumstances of each case and laws and regulations are frequently changing, nothing provided herein should be used as a substitute for the advice of counsel in the relevant jurisdiction.