



Senate Committee on Finance
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633

January 29, 2026

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Finance,

I am writing on behalf of the Vermont Retail & Grocers Association to express our support for S.220. VRGA represents grocery stores, retailers, wholesalers, and related businesses operating in communities across Vermont, employing thousands of Vermonters and serving residents in every region of the state.

Our members are operating in an environment of sustained financial pressure. They are contending with rising labor costs, escalating healthcare and insurance expenses, higher energy prices, and ongoing inflation that affects both operating costs and consumer purchasing power. These pressures are not abstract. They directly influence decisions about staffing, pricing, investment, and whether businesses can continue to operate in the communities they serve.

In this context, predictability and restraint matter. Vermont businesses must plan within defined financial limits and regularly adjust budgets to align with economic conditions. When major cost drivers continue to grow without meaningful constraints, it becomes increasingly difficult for employers to plan responsibly or absorb additional increases. S.220 moves toward establishing clearer expectations and reasonable boundaries at a time when cost growth is outpacing economic reality. Retailers and grocers operate on thin margins and play an essential role in local economies. Sharp and unpredictable increases place pressure not only on businesses, but also on workers, consumers, and municipalities. Measures that help moderate the pace of growth provide needed stability while longer-term structural solutions are evaluated and developed.

VRGA views S.220 as a practical step toward cost containment. It is not a substitute for comprehensive reform, but it does respond to the immediate strain facing employers and households and helps prevent further destabilization while that work continues. For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to advance S.220. Thank you for your consideration and for your attention to the conditions facing Vermont's business community.

Sincerely,

Ed Fox

Ed Fox
President
Vermont Retail & Grocers Association