

Contact: Tom Wenning
National Grocers Association
Senior Vice President and General Counsel
703.516.0700

N.G.A. APPLAUDS THE OSHA ERGONOMIC GUIDELINE EFFORT

ARLINGTON, Virginia (April 5, 2002) – Today, the National Grocers Association (N.G.A.) commended Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao and the Occupation Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) for the decision to pursue ergonomic guidelines rather than the course of mandatory standards that were soundly rejected and rescinded by Congress last year.

"Our goal is to help workers by reducing ergonomic injuries in the shortest possible time frame," said Chao. "This plan is a major improvement over the rejected old rule because it will prevent ergonomics injuries before they occur and reach a much larger number of at-risk workers."

Over the course of the last year, the Department of Labor (DOL) conducted three major public forums around the country and met with many stakeholders, collecting hundreds of sets of written comments and taking testimony from 100 speakers, including N.G.A., organized labor, workers, medical experts, and businesses.

N.G.A. President Tom Zaucha noted that in its testimony last July, "N.G.A. recommended that voluntary collaborative efforts between government and the private sector were far more workable than costly and burdensome mandates. N.G.A. will work cooperatively with OSHA, as it proceeds in the coming months to develop industry guidelines, to assure that the decrease in work related ergonomic injuries continues."

Occupational Safety and Health Administrator John Henshaw said his agency will immediately begin work on developing industry and task-specific guidelines to reduce and prevent ergonomic injuries that occur in the workplace. OSHA expects to begin releasing guidelines ready for application in selected industries this year and will also encourage other businesses and industries to immediately develop additional guidelines of their own.

OSHA will have special ergonomics inspection teams that will, from the earliest stages, work closely with DOL attorneys and experts to successfully bring prosecutions under the General Duty clause. To view the OSHA statement and frequently asked questions regarding the ergonomics issue, please visit the N.G.A. website at www.nationalgrocers.org.

See [OSHA Announcement](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

N.G.A. is the national trade association representing the retail and wholesale grocers that comprise the independent sector of the food distribution industry. An independent retailer is a privately owned or controlled food retail company operating in a variety of formats. Some are publicly traded but with controlling shares held by the family. Most independent operators are serviced by wholesale distributors, while others may be partially or fully self-distributing. Independents are the true "entrepreneurs" of the grocery industry and dedicated to their customers, associates, and communities. N.G.A. members include retail and wholesale grocers and their state associations, as well as manufacturers and service suppliers.

