

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**National Grocers Association Calls on OSHA to Provide Assurances that  
Ergonomics Guidelines for Retail Grocery Will Remain Voluntary**

WASHINGTON – As the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued its much anticipated voluntary ergonomics guidelines for retail grocery, the National Grocers Association (N.G.A.) today reiterated its stance that OSHA should provide the nation’s independent, community-focused retail grocers and wholesalers with greater assurances that OSHA’s voluntary ergonomics guidelines for retail grocery will not become, in practice, a mandatory ergonomics standard.

“N.G.A. supports the collaborative spirit in which OSHA developed these guidelines, and continues to support Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao’s commitment to voluntary, industry-specific solutions to reducing workplace injuries. An environment that seeks real-life solutions through open collaboration rather than confrontation is a preferable and more effective public policy approach,” said Thomas K. Zaucha, President & CEO of N.G.A.

“However, OSHA must ensure that recommendations or guidelines will not create a platform for unjustified general duty clause enforcement. N.G.A. strongly believes that OSHA must maintain its commitment to not pursue enforcement of the general duty clause in concert with the voluntary guidelines at any time. The Department of Labor and OSHA should make this policy clear to its field personnel in no uncertain terms,” said Thomas F. Wenning, N.G.A. Senior Vice President & General Counsel.

“Reducing any incidence of workplace injury is a primary goal for the entire grocery industry, including community-focused retail grocers. The grocery industry has reduced occupational injuries by a third over the last ten years – from 12.5 per hundred full-time workers in 1992 to 8.1 in 2001,” Wenning added. “It is important that OSHA not curtail this progress by imposing a one-size-fits-all ergonomics standard. Even the perception that OSHA might issue general duty clause citations based on the voluntary guidelines would undermine the industry’s ongoing and very successful ergonomics efforts.”

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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. Most independent operators are serviced by wholesale distributors, while others may be partially or fully self-distributing. Some are publicly traded but with controlling shares held by the family and others are employee owned. 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, state grocers associations, as well as manufacturers and service suppliers..