

March 10, 2026

The Honorable Ash Kalra
California State Assembly

1020 N Street, Room 104
Sacramento, CA 95814



RE: AB 1857 (Aguiar-Curry) – Conditions of Ownership: Grocery Stores — Concerns

Dear Chair Kalra,

On behalf of the California Retailers Association, I write to express our concerns with AB 1857, which would add Section 714.8 to the Civil Code relating to conditions of ownership affecting grocery stores.

Our organization represents retailers and grocery operators that serve communities across California, including many neighborhood and independent grocers that provide essential access to food and household goods. We appreciate the author's interest in the long-term viability of grocery stores and recognize the important role these businesses play in supporting local economies and food access.

We also appreciate the opportunity to work with the author's office on this proposal. However, as currently drafted, AB 1857 raises several concerns for the retail and grocery industry that we believe warrant further discussion and clarification.

First, the bill's proposed restrictions relating to conditions of ownership may unintentionally limit standard commercial real estate practices that allow grocery stores to operate efficiently within shopping centers and mixed-use developments. Grocery stores frequently rely on negotiated lease provisions and property agreements to ensure operational viability, manage tenant mix, and maintain appropriate infrastructure for perishable goods and high-volume retail operations.

Second, the measure could create uncertainty in existing contractual relationships between property owners, developers, and grocery tenants. Without clearer parameters regarding how these provisions apply to current and future agreements, the bill may introduce legal ambiguity and increase the risk of disputes between property owners and tenants.

Third, we are concerned that the bill may have unintended consequences for grocery store investment and development, particularly in underserved communities where grocery projects already face significant financial and regulatory challenges. Policies that create uncertainty in ownership or leasing conditions may make it more difficult to attract investment in new grocery locations or sustain existing stores.

We strongly support efforts to ensure communities maintain access to grocery stores and essential food retail. However, we believe additional stakeholder engagement and clarification of the bill's scope are necessary to ensure the policy achieves its goals without negatively impacting grocery operators, property owners, or the communities they serve.

For these reasons, we must respectfully express concerns with AB 1857 as currently written. We look forward to continuing to work with the author's office to address these issues and support both community access to grocery stores and a stable operating environment for the industry.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jacob Brint". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "J" and a large "A" at the end.

Jacob Brint
Legislative and Regulatory Manager
California Retailers Association

cc: Members, Assembly Committee on Judiciary
Consultant, Assembly Committee on Judiciary