

STATE SENATOR • GRETCHEN WHITMER • 23RD DISTRICT

Whitmer Press Release

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Whitmer Bill Would Protect Taxpayers from Cost of Product Recalls *Require Attorney General to Pursue Damages Over \$25K*

LANSING-This week, Senator Gretchen Whitmer (D-East Lansing) requested a bill to protect Michigan taxpayers from footing the bill for irresponsible, potentially lawbreaking companies that produce faulty products. The bill will require Michigan's Attorney General to seek to recoup losses to the Michigan budget any time the state spends more than \$25,000 to protect Michigan citizens as a result of a product recall.

"At a time when throwing out a single jar of peanut butter is painful to many family budgets, taxpayers shouldn't bear the cost of recalling thousands," said Sen. Whitmer. "This common sense legislation would ensure that the companies whose products are being recalled are responsible for paying for it."

This bill comes on the heels of an announcement by the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) that the recall efforts associated with the peanut recall this year have already cost the department over \$400,000 and could climb as high as \$800,000. Expenses have been running \$55,000 per week as MDA staff do everything from ensuring the tainted product is removed from store shelves by visiting stores around the state to maintaining transparent communication with the public and retailers.

The MDA's number one priority is ensuring food safety for our citizens. Recalls and recall effectiveness checks require a substantial amount of dedicated resources. As the lawyer for the State of Michigan, it should be the Attorney General's responsibility to see that those liable for the losses incurred by the people of Michigan through damages to the state budget justly compensate the state for those losses. This bill will ensure the Michigan Attorney General will act in the interests of the Michigan taxpayer when a product recall is responsible for sizeable losses to the state budget.

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