

Sign-on Letter in Support of the Food Labeling Modernization Act

This organizational sign-on letter was developed by Center for Science in the Public Interest. The letter will be shared with Congress in support of the Food Labeling Modernization Act (H.R.2901/S.1289). We are only accepting sign-ons from organizations (not individuals). The deadline to sign is Friday, May 26, 2023.

The letter can be found below and at:

https://mcusercontent.com/56c53970e9e8f3069990102a6/files/3eb86daa-a677-9645-7604-df000584ef32/FLMA_2023_sign_on_letter_5.8.23.docx

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May X, 2023

Dear [Member of Congress],

We, the undersigned groups, write to convey our strong endorsement of the Food Labeling Modernization Act (FLMA) (H.R.2901/S.1289). The bill, introduced by Representative Frank Pallone and Senator Richard Blumenthal, along with Representative Rosa DeLauro and Senators Cory Booker, Ben Cardin, Ed Markey and Sheldon Whitehouse, would increase transparency, encourage healthier product formulations, counter misleading food claims, and promote informed choices. We urge you to cosponsor the FLMA to align food labeling policies with advancements in nutrition science and technology.

Food labels can play an important role in promoting healthy eating and preventing diet-related chronic diseases. Yet today's food labels do not provide the simple, straightforward information that consumers need to evaluate products and make healthy choices.

For example, studies show that consumers with less education and lower incomes are less likely to use the complex Nutrition Facts label, demonstrating inequitable access to nutrition information under current labeling policies (1). To make nutrition information more accessible, the FLMA directs the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to establish a simple, standard front-of-package labeling system for foods sold in the United States. Dozens of countries have implemented similar systems and seen significant public health gains (2).

The FLMA also brings food labels into the 21st century by requiring that nutrition, ingredient, and allergen information be available for grocery items sold online. Nearly one-third of Americans regularly buy groceries online (3), but basic product information is not always available (4). Updates to align food labeling laws with modern consumer practices are long overdue.

The bill will help counter misleading claims that make foods appear healthier than they



truly are. For example, consumers sometimes misjudge the whole grain content of foods with claims like “multigrain” and “honey wheat” (5). The FLMA would require products using terms like these to also declare what percent of the grains are whole versus refined. This transparency will make it easier for consumers to follow dietary recommendations to make at least half of their daily grains whole grains (6).

As one of several other measures that increase transparency, the FLMA requires clearer disclosure of gluten-containing grains. This is a critical step to protect the millions of people in the U.S. with celiac disease, a digestive disorder triggered by gluten (7).

Please support the health of our nation and consumers' fundamental right to know what is in their food by supporting the Food Labeling Modernization Act!

Sincerely,

Center for Science in the Public Interest

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(1) Christoph MJ, Larson N, Laska M, Neumark-Sztainer D. Nutrition Facts: who is using them, what are they using, and how does it relate to dietary intake? *J Acad Nutr Diet*. 2018;118(2):217-228.

(2) World Cancer Research Fund International. Building momentum: lessons on implementing a robust front-of-pack food label. 2019. <https://www.wcrf.org/policy/our-publications/building-momentum-series/lessons-implementing-robust-front-of-pack-food-label/>. Accessed August 2, 2021.

Reyes M, et al. Changes in the amount of nutrient of packaged foods and beverages after the initial implementation of the Chilean Law of Food Labelling and Advertising: a nonexperimental prospective study. *PLOS Medicine*. 2020;17(7):e1003220.

Bablani L, et al. The impact of voluntary front-of-pack nutrition labelling on packaged food reformulation: a difference-in-differences analysis of the Australasian Health Star Rating scheme. *PLoS Med*. 2020;17(11):e1003427.

(3) Shoup ME. Online grocery sales stabilize as market enters new growth cycle with ‘large base of committed shoppers.’ *Food Navigator*. September 10, 2020. <https://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/Article/2020/09/10/Online-grocery-sales-stabilize-as-market-enters-new-growth-cycle-with-large-base-of-committed-shoppers>. Accessed May 7, 2021.

(4) Olzenak K, et al. How online grocery stores support consumer nutrition information needs. *JNEB*. 2020;52(10):952-957.


(5) Wilde P, Pomeranz JL, Lizewski LJ, & Zhang FF. Confusion about whole grain content and healthfulness in product labels: a discrete choice experiment and comprehension assessment. *Public Health Nutrition*. 2020; 23(18):3324-3331.

(6) U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025*. 9th Edition. December 2020. Available at DietaryGuidelines.gov.

(7) National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases. Definition & Facts for Celiac Disease. October 2020. <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/celiac-disease/definition-facts>. Accessed May 7, 2021.



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