

June 7, 2023

Dear Members 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

The FLMA also brings food labels into the 21<sup>st</sup> 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,<sup>3</sup> but basic product information is not always available.<sup>4</sup> 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."<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup>

As one of several 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.<sup>7</sup>

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,

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology  
American Institute for Cancer Research  
Association of SNAP Nutrition Education Administrators  
Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America  
Balanced  
Beyond Celiac  
Campaign Urging Research for Eosinophilic Disease  
Celiac Disease Foundation  
Center for Science in the Public Interest

Consumer Federation of America  
Consumer Reports  
Environmental Working Group  
Food Allergy Research & Education  
Gluten Free Watchdog  
Gluten Intolerance Group of North America  
Hattie Mae and PALS Foundation  
International Fresh Produce Association  
National Association of Chronic Disease Directors  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Celiac Association  
National Center for Health Research  
Rudd Center for Food Policy & Health  
Society for Behavioral Medicine  
Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior  
The FPIES Foundation

## References

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- <sup>2</sup> 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.
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- <sup>3</sup> 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.
- <sup>4</sup> Olzenak K, et al. How online grocery stores support consumer nutrition information needs. *JNEB.* 2020;52(10):952-957.
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- <sup>6</sup> 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](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov).
- <sup>7</sup> 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.