

March 16, 2009

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce
2204 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-0530

Attn: Karen Nelson

Dear Chairman Waxman:

The undersigned organizations would like to meet with you to discuss legislation to modernize the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990 (NLEA). Many of our organizations worked closely with your office in 1989 when you introduced legislation that eventually became the NLEA and would welcome the opportunity to do so again.

We know that even in these economically troubled times we must keep working on long-term health promotion efforts, focusing especially on matters such as improving food labeling that do not require increased funding, yet produce great returns in terms of health care cost savings. Food labeling is a key component of a comprehensive public health promotion strategy to combat both childhood and adult obesity and diet-related diseases such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease.

However, to continue the positive process and fulfill the health promotion potential that your previous food labeling initiative produced, the NLEA must be updated. Because many changes and new discoveries have occurred since the NLEA was enacted in 1990, the current law does not match today's health priorities. Further, since its enactment, some companies have taken advantage of certain areas in the 1990 law where guidance is missing or incomplete, leading to unintended consequences. This has reduced the positive impact that food labeling can have on the public's health.

While FDA has the authority to address certain aspects of this problem, the nature and scope of the needed reforms indicate the necessity for Congress to take the lead. We hope that you will once again champion this issue by holding hearings and supporting legislation that would bring the NLEA into step with today's health priorities.

We look forward to meeting with you at your earliest convenience.

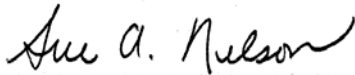
Sincerely,



Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA
Executive Vice President, CEO
American Medical Association



Daniel E. Smith
President
American Cancer Society
Cancer Action Network



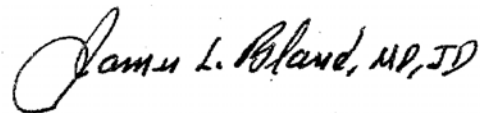
Sue A. Nelson
Vice President, Federal Advocacy
American Heart Association



Martha Archuleta, PhD, RD
President
Society for Nutrition Education



Shereen Arent
Executive Vice President Government
Affairs and Advocacy
American Diabetes Association



James L. Bland, MD, JD
President
American Society of Bariatric
Physicians



Michael F. Jacobson, PhD
Executive Director
Center for Science in the Public Interest



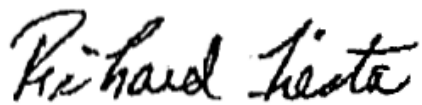
Carolyn W. Jackson, CFCS
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