

**N.G.A. Action Alert**  
**June 21, 2004**

**N.G.A.-Supported Labeling Bill Introduced in House;  
Retailers, Wholesalers Need to Build Support for H.R. 4576**

We've just wrapped up the 2004 Washington Conference, which was attended by about 150 retailers, wholesalers, state association executives and manufacturers. As we had anticipated, House Agriculture Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) and Ranking Member Charles W. Stenholm (D-TX) introduced their bill (H.R. 4576) to replace the mandatory country of origin labeling program and replace it with a voluntary system of labeling. The timing could not have been better - the day after the bill's introduction, Washington Conference attendees conducted about 100 meetings with members of Congress and urged their support for this critically important bill.

The bill, titled the Food Promotion Act of 2004, directs USDA to develop voluntary country of origin labeling programs for produce, beef, veal, lamb, pork and seafood. N.G.A. and a broad coalition of food industry groups have come together to support this bill because it will provide consumers with country of origin information without imposing needless bureaucratic requirements and costs. In contrast, the current mandatory country of origin labeling law and proposed regulations will hurt all segments of the food industry - including retailers, wholesalers, producers and processors - through burdensome compliance and recordkeeping costs.

Our effort to see this costly mandatory labeling program eliminated and a voluntary system put in place is entering a critical phase. Chairman Goodlatte intends to move the bill through the Agriculture Committee, and then on to the House floor. It will be of the utmost importance for our industry to do all that it can to generate cosponsors and votes for the bill - first among the Agriculture Committee, then others in the House. We need to get commitments from Agriculture Committee members to vote for the bill in Committee, and then to get as many House members as possible to agree to vote in favor of the bill on the floor.

Call your House members immediately. The upcoming Fourth of July recess is also an excellent opportunity to meet with your members of Congress in their district offices. Ask your member's commitment to cosponsor and vote for H.R. 4576. If your member is listed below as a cosponsor of the bill, be sure to express your thanks, and emphasize the importance of this bill to our industry. Also ask members of the Agriculture Committee to support the bill in the Committee vote. All congressional offices can be reached through the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121. Please let N.G.A. know the answers you get from your lawmakers - help us keep track of support for H.R. 4576. If you have questions or need more information, please contact Tom Wenning at (703) 516-0700 or [twenning@nationalgrocers.org](mailto:twenning@nationalgrocers.org), or Mike Mason at (703) 516-0700 or [mmason@nationalgrocers.org](mailto:mmason@nationalgrocers.org).

**Cosponsors of H.R. 4675:**

Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) *	Sam Farr (D-CA)
Ranking Member Charles W. Stenholm (D-TX) *	Robin Hayes (R-NC) *
Anibal Acevedo-Vila (D-PR) *	Mark R. Kennedy (R-MN)
Marion Berry (D-AR)	Marilyn N. Musgrave (R-CO) *
John A. Boehner (R-OH) *	Randy Neugebauer (R-TX) *
Henry Bonilla (R-TX)	Solomon P. Ortiz (D-TX)
Chris Chocola (R-IN) *	John E. Peterson (R-PA)
Calvin M. Dooley (D-CA) *	Nick Smith (R-MI) *

\* Indicates Agriculture Committee Member

**House Agriculture Committee**

**Republicans**

Bob Goodlatte , VA, Chairman  
John A. Boehner , OH, Vice Chairman  
Richard W. Pombo , CA  
Nick Smith , MI  
Terry Everett , AL  
Frank D. Lucas , OK  
Jerry Moran , KS  
William L. Jenkins , TN  
Gil Gutknecht , MN  
Doug Ose , CA  
Robin Hayes , NC  
Charles W. "Chip" Pickering , MS  
Timothy V. Johnson , IL  
Tom Osborne , NE  
Mike Pence , IN  
Dennis R. Rehberg , MT  
Sam Graves , MO  
Adam H. Putnam , FL  
Max Burns , GA  
Jo Bonner , AL  
Mike Rogers , AL  
Steve King , IA  
Chris Chocola , IN  
Marilyn N. Musgrave , CO  
Devin Nunes , CA  
Randy Neugebauer , TX

**Democrats**

Charles W. Stenholm , TX  
Collin C. Peterson , MN  
Calvin M. Dooley , CA  
Tim Holden , PA  
Bennie G. Thompson , MS  
Mike McIntyre , NC  
Bob Etheridge , NC  
Baron P. Hill , IN  
Joe Baca , CA  
Mike Ross , AR  
Aníbal Acevedo-Vilá , PR  
Ed Case , HI  
Rodney Alexander , LA  
Frank W. Ballance Jr. , NC  
Dennis A. Cardoza , CA  
David Scott , GA  
Jim Marshall , GA  
Ben Chandler , KY  
Earl Pomeroy , ND  
Leonard L. Boswell , IA  
Mike Thompson , CA  
Mark Udall , CO  
Rick Larsen , WA  
Lincoln Davis , TN

If you have questions or need additional information, contact Tom Wenning at [publicaffairs@nationalgrocers.org](mailto:publicaffairs@nationalgrocers.org).

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