

N.G.A. Action Alert

July 19, 2004

URGENT: Call Members of the House Agriculture Committee, Secure Commitments to Vote for H.R. 4576 Without Amendments; Bill Would Repeal Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling, Replace With Voluntary System

H.R. 4576, the bill which would repeal the burdensome and costly mandatory country of origin labeling program and replace it with a voluntary system, will be considered by the House Agriculture Committee on Thursday morning. **Your calls to members of the Agriculture Committee are urgently needed in order to secure the committee's passage of this vitally important legislation, without amendment.**

It cannot be emphasized more strongly that our industry must be out in force in order to generate momentum in Congress for passage of H.R. 4576. The first step in this effort is to see the bill passed by the House Agriculture Committee with strong bipartisan support. The bill was introduced by Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) and the committee's ranking Democrat, Charles W. Stenholm (D-TX), and currently has a total of 29 cosponsors. **Every vote will count.** Listed below are the members of the House Agriculture Committee. **If you have operations in their states or districts, please call them immediately.** Ask members who have not signed on as cosponsors to vote for H.R. 4576 without amendment. Also, thank those who are cosponsors, ask for their continued support, and reiterate the importance of passing this bill without amendment. Please make these calls Tuesday and Wednesday, in advance of Thursday's committee markup session on the bill.

N.G.A. and a broad coalition of food industry groups have come together to support H.R. 4576 because it will provide U.S. agricultural producers with the benefits of country of origin labeling without the costs and burdens of the mandatory approach. USDA estimated that the first-year implementation costs of the mandatory labeling program to the food industry could reach \$3.9 billion. The voluntary labeling program envisioned under H.R. 4576 would do away with the extensive recordkeeping requirements that retailers and wholesalers would face under the mandatory program, which include third-party audits, two-year paper trails and other requirements. As it stands now, mandatory labeling is set to take effect September 30, 2004 with respect to farm-raised and wild fish, and with respect to other covered commodities (muscle cuts of beef, pork and lamb, fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables, and peanuts) on September 30, 2006.

Call members of the House Agriculture Committee, listed below. Please let N.G.A. know the results of your contact with your Representatives by contacting N.G.A. Senior Vice President & General Counsel Tom Wenning at (703) 516-0700 or twenning@nationalgrocers.org, or N.G.A. Director of Public Affairs Mike Mason at (703) 516-0700 or mmason@nationalgrocers.org. All phone numbers listed below are (202) 225-XXXX, or you can reach any congressional office by dialing the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121.

House Agriculture Committee

All phone numbers listed below are (202) 225-XXXX

Republicans	Cosponsor Phone	Democrats	Cosponsor Phone
Bob Goodlatte, VA Chairman	Yes 5431	Charles W. Stenholm, TX	Yes 6605
John A. Boehner, OH Vice Chairman	Yes 6205	Collin C. Peterson, MN	5031
Richard W. Pombo, CA	1947	Calvin M. Dooley, CA	Yes 3341
Nick Smith, MI	Yes 6276	Tim Holden, PA	5546
		Bennie G. Thompson, MS	5876
		Mike McIntyre, NC	4761

Terry Everett, AL		2901	Bob Etheridge, NC	4531
Frank D. Lucas, OK		5565	Baron P. Hill, IN	5315
Jerry Moran, KS		2715	Joe Baca, CA	6161
William L. Jenkins, TN		6536	Mike Ross, AR	3772
Gil Gutknecht, MN		2472	Aníbal Acevedo-Vilá, PR	Yes 2615
Doug Ose, CA		5716	Ed Case, HI	4906
Robin Hayes, NC	Yes	3715	Rodney Alexander, LA	8490
Charles W. "Chip" Pickering, MS		5031	Dennis A. Cardoza, CA	6131
Timothy V. Johnson, IL		2371	David Scott, GA	2939
Tom Osborne, NE		6435	Jim Marshall, GA	6531
Mike Pence , IN	Yes	3021	Ben Chandler, KY	4706
Dennis R. Rehberg , MT		3211	Stephanie Herseth, SD	2801
Sam Graves , MO		7041	Earl Pomeroy, ND	2611
Adam H. Putnam , FL		1252	Leonard L. Boswell, IA	3806
Max Burns , GA		2823	Mark Udall, CO	2161
Jo Bonner , AL		4931	Rick Larsen, WA	2605
Mike Rogers , AL		3261	Lincoln Davis, TN	6831
Steve King , IA		4426		
Chris Chocola , IN	Yes	3915		
Marilyn N. Musgrave , CO	Yes	4676		
Devin Nunes , CA		2523		
Randy Neugebauer , TX	Yes	4005		

If you have questions or need additional information, contact Tom Wenning at publicaffairs@nationalgrocers.org.

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