



ACTION ALERT

April 25, 2005

House Agriculture Chairman to Introduce COL Repeal Bills

Contact Your Representative and Urge them to Cosponsor the Bill to Repeal COL for All Covered Commodities

In upcoming weeks, Representative Bob Goodlatte (R-VA), Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee will be introducing a bill providing for the permanent repeal of mandatory country of origin labeling (COL) for all commodities covered by the law (the “comprehensive bill”). The language in the bill is the same as Chairman Goodlatte’s 2004 COL repeal bill that was approved by the House Agriculture Committee last year. Chairman Goodlatte is also introducing a separate bill providing for the repeal of mandatory COL for only meat products (the “meat-only bill”). **N.G.A. is supporting the bill that repeals mandatory COL for all covered commodities as the first priority for the grocery industry. Grocers should call their representatives to urge them to cosponsor the comprehensive bill.**

Chairman Goodlatte has indicated to us that he is waiting to introduce the comprehensive bill until we secure a significant number of cosponsors. Therefore it is critical that you call your representatives and urge them to cosponsor the COL repeal bill providing for repeal of **all covered commodities**. **Please contact your member of Congress and other members of Congress with whom you have a relationship and urge them to cosponsor the comprehensive bill. Call the House switchboard at (202) 225-3121 to connect with any member. Tell members of Congress and their staffs to contact Debbie Smith at the House Agriculture Committee at (202) 225-2171 to become a cosponsor of the comprehensive bill. If you are asked about the meat-only bill, tell your representative you also support it.** The more representatives we have on both bills, the greater the prospects for repealing this burdensome regulation.

Once a representative you have contacted agrees to sign-on to the bill, please forward this information along with the representative’s staff contact to N.G.A.’s Director of Government Affairs, Erik Lieberman at lieberman@nationalgrocers.org or (703) 516-0700.

Please see the attached list of members of Congress that have already committed to cosponsoring the COL repeal legislation. It is not necessary to get in touch with these representatives. Also attached is a list of members who cosponsored Chairman Goodlatte’s COL repeal bill last year, but have yet to commit to cosponsoring this year. We urge you to contact the members of Congress on this list.

As a reminder, the 2002 Farm bill was signed into law (P.L. 107-171) containing a provision requiring retailers to label fresh and frozen muscle cuts of beef, veal, lamb, pork and seafood, fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables, and peanuts with the country of origin and, in the case of seafood, method of production (wild or farm raised). The Farm bill required that the mandatory COL program be implemented by the fall of 2004. In 2003, the implementation of mandatory COL for all covered commodities except seafood was delayed until September 30, 2006.

The interim final rule for mandatory country of origin labeling of seafood went into effect on April 4, 2005. As of that date, all retailers are required to ensure that consumers receive information on the country of origin and method of production for all seafood products covered by the rule.

Please call Erik Lieberman at (703) 516-0700 if you have any further questions. We appreciate your efforts in this campaign to repeal COL.

Last year's cosponsors who have yet to sign on (call)

Rep. Blunt, Roy (R-MO)
Rep. Boozman, John (R-AR)
Rep. Chocola, Chris (R-IN)
Rep. Farr, Sam (D-CA)
Rep. Hinojosa, Ruben (D-TX)
Rep. Kline, John (R-MN)
Rep. Manzullo, Donald A. (R-IL)
Rep. Moran, James P. (D-VA)
Rep. Musgrave, Marilyn N. (R-CO)
Rep. Neugebauer, Randy (R-TX)
Rep. Pence, Mike (R-IN)
Rep. Peterson, John E. (R-PA)
Rep. Petri, Thomas E. (R-WI)
Rep. Renzi, Rick (R-AZ)
Rep. Young, Don (R-AK)

Confirmed cosponsors (do not call)

Rep. Berry, Marion (D-AK)
Rep. Boehner, John (R-OH)
Rep. Bonilla, Henry (R-TX)
Rep. Bradley, Jeb (R-NH)
Rep. Foxx, Virginia (R-NC)
Rep. Graves, Sam (R-MO)
Rep. Hayes, Robin (R-NC)
Rep. Kennedy, Mark (R-MN)
Rep. Kingston, Jack (R-GA)
Rep. Oxley, Michael G. (R-OH)
Rep. Ortiz, Solomon (D-TX)
Rep. Pryce, Deborah (R-OH)
Rep. Ross, Mike (D-AK)
Rep. Shimkus, John (R-IL)