

NATIONAL UNIFORMITY FOR FOOD COALITION

www.uniformityforfood.org

For Immediate Release

Contacts: Stephanie Childs, GMA (202) 337-9400
Tim Willard, FPA (202) 637-8060

Senate HELP Committee Hearing Highlights Need for Uniform Food Safety Standards and Warning Labels

July 27, 2006, Washington, D.C. – The National Uniformity for Food Coalition today applauded members of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee for hosting a hearing on the National Uniformity for Food Act (S. 3128), and encouraged the Senate to act quickly on the legislation.

C. Manly Molpus, president and CEO of the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA), was pleased with the opportunity for the Senate and the American public to see the benefits of the bill. He said, “Today’s testimony clearly demonstrates the need for national uniformity when it comes to food safety. Consumers across the country get conflicting advice about the foods they eat because of inconsistencies in food safety policy. Everyone from Portland, Maine to Portland, Oregon deserves consistent food safety information.”

The measure enhances the partnership between federal and state governments by explicitly preserving appropriate food safety duties for each entity, such as a state’s ability to act on imminent health hazards or bioterrorist threats affecting the food supply. In cases where a state’s law differs from the federal standard, it may petition the FDA to keep the existing state law in place or consider adopting the state law as a national standard. States can also apply for an exemption based on unique local needs. Under this provision no state law disappears overnight.

The bill would extend the same consumer protections to packaged food as in other areas of federal regulation including nutrition and allergen labeling, and meat and poultry regulations.

“Establishing uniform food safety tolerances and warning labels at the national level is the next logical step for uniformity in food regulations,” said Cal Dooley, CEO-elect of GMA/FPA. “Congress has recognized the importance of creating uniform, national food standards in the past. We are pleased with the HELP Committee’s thoughtful consideration today and encourage the swift passage of this common-sense bill.”

The measure also serves to rein in inconsistent state regulations, such as those imposed under California’s Proposition 65. The Coalition revealed today that trial lawyers and bounty hunters have received as much as 82 percent of annual settlement fees in lawsuits brought against companies charged with Proposition 65 violations. This bill would enable food producers to meet one consistent, science-based set of food safety regulations.

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About the National Uniformity for Food Coalition:

The mission of the National Uniformity for Food Coalition is to provide consumers with a single set of food safety standards that are developed in cooperation with state policymakers, and that are based on a consensus interpretation of the entire body of scientific evidence. www.uniformityforfood.org