

North Carolina Beverage Association, Inc.

21 Glenwood Avenue, Suite 201
Raleigh, NC 27603
919-828-2737 ■ FAX 919-828-2239

February 21, 2006

Congressman G.K. Butterfield
413 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Butterfield:

On behalf of the members of the NC Beverage Association (formerly the NC Soft Drink Association), I am writing to thank you for cosponsoring H.R. 4167, the National Uniformity for Food Act of 2005. You are one of nine members of the North Carolina Congressional Delegation to sign on as a cosponsor. We are proud that you chose to support this bill to assure a single national standard for food safety and warnings.

Consumers throughout the nation will benefit greatly from this bill. They deserve to know that they have a safe food supply. This is best—and most efficiently—accomplished through a uniform, nationwide approach under the jurisdiction of FDA. And, in the years since 9-11, it has become an even more critical concern.

From our members' perspective, the beverage industry has become a multi-state business. Drinks *should and do* contain the same ingredients, whether sold in North Carolina, Virginia, South Carolina, Tennessee, Montana, Hawaii, or Washington, D.C. There is not a good reason to require identical products to carry different labels in each state. Moreover, there is a tremendous additional business burden and cost to bottlers incident to maintaining segregated inventories. This unnecessary cost is of course ultimately shared with the consumer.

A further onerous problem if states are left to craft their own labeling requirements: Bottlers *face potential criminal exposure* if products destined for one state are inadvertently delivered to retail outlets in a different state with different labeling requirements. This outlandish possibility would be silly, if it weren't so serious.

Lack of labeling uniformity runs counter to the realities of today's food and beverage marketplace. H.R. 4167 sensibly solves the problem while giving consumers in every state the same degree of confidence in the labels on all food and beverage products.

We believe that H.R. 4167 will be voted on in the House during the week of February 27. We respectfully urge you to be present for that vote, and to resist any "catfish" amendments offered to undercut this serious-minded legislation.

Again, we are most appreciative to you for cosponsoring H.R. 4167.

Sincerely,

George Suddath
Chairman

Butch Gunnells
President

CC: Members, NC Beverage Association

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