

◆ Amberwaves Network ◆ California Certified Organic Farmers ◆ California League for Environmental Enforcement Now ◆ Center for Environmental Health ◆ Center for Food Safety ◆ Center for Science in the Public Interest ◆ Consumer Federation of America ◆ Consumers Union ◆ Edmonds Institute ◆ Environmental Law Foundation ◆ Food & Water Watch ◆ Gotmercury.org ◆ Government Accountability Project ◆ Institute for Agriculture Trade and Policy ◆ Mateel Environmental Justice Foundation ◆ National Consumers League ◆ National Environmental Trust ◆ Natural Resources Defense Council ◆ Oceana ◆ Organic Consumers Association ◆ Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine ◆ Physicians for Social Responsibility ◆ Say No to GMOs ◆ Sierra Club ◆ Union of Concerned Scientists ◆ U.S. Public Interest Research Groups ◆ Washington Biotechnology Action Council ◆ Western Sustainable Agriculture Working Group

Re: Oppose S. 3128, Food “Uniformity” Bill

27 September 2006

Dear Representative/Senator:

It is imperative that S. 3128, the “Uniformity for Food Act,” not be attached to an appropriations bill or other “must pass” legislation. On behalf of our millions of members and supporters, we urge you to support the safety of America’s food supply by opposing any effort to do so. S. 3128 overturns hundreds of state laws designed to protect the safety of the food we eat. With news on the outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 bacteria in spinach making headlines every day, Congress should be doing more to protect our food; this bill takes us in the wrong direction.

Our food safety system today relies upon state and local government officials to do much of the nation’s food safety work. The bill would preempt over 200 state and local laws that protect consumers by filling the gaps left by the under-staffed and under-funded Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Under the bill, states would no longer have the authority to provide important protections for the public, such as establishing shellfish and milk standards, as well as allowing for restaurant inspections – unless the FDA granted a state waiver.

The waiver process would impose huge financial burdens on the financially-strapped FDA and states. CBO has estimated that this legislation would require the FDA to spend \$100 million over five years reviewing over 240 waiver requests. Moreover, states would incur substantial legal and technical expenses in seeking an FDA waiver. These federal and state resources could be better used in promoting food safety.

For these reasons, it is not surprising that the vast majority of editorial writers, state officials, and environmental, consumer, health, labor and other groups strongly oppose this problematic legislation.

We strongly urge you to oppose any attempt to insert this egregious rollback of state and local food safety programs in any appropriations bill or other “must pass” legislation in the remaining days of the 109th Congress. The bill has not been voted on by the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee and deserves a full and open debate.

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Susanna Montezemolo at Consumers Union at (202) 462-6262 ext. 1103.

Sincerely,

Amberwaves Network
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California League for Environmental
Enforcement Now
Center for Environmental Health
Center for Food Safety
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Consumer Federation of America
Consumers Union, nonprofit publisher of
Consumer Reports
Edmonds Institute
Environmental Law Foundation
Food & Water Watch
Gotmercury.org
Government Accountability Project

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Mateel Environmental Justice Foundation
National Consumers League
National Environmental Trust
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Organic Consumers Association
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