



HOUSE BILL 567

Food Service Facilities – Artificial Trans Fats – Prohibition

March 3, 2009

POSITION: Support with Amendment

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

On behalf of the members of the *Restaurant Association of Maryland*, we support House Bill 567 with an amendment that would remove the exemption for packaged goods and broaden the scope of this legislation to also include packaged goods sold at retail stores.

The restaurant industry strongly supports phasing out the use of artificial trans fats (products containing more than 0.5 gram of trans fats per serving) in the foods we serve. In fact, most restaurants have already eliminated trans fats from frying oil and are currently securing trans fat-free alternatives for baked goods, prepared batters and other products. Our goal is to be virtually trans fat-free by the time this legislation takes effect in October 2010.

We do not understand, however, why the scope of this legislation does not include packaged foods served at restaurants or sold at retail stores. There are many packaged goods that contain more than 0.5 gram of trans fat per serving, including Sara Lee Danishes, Tootsie Rolls, Pillsbury prepared dough and Little Debbie snack crackers, to name a few. Moreover, children have much greater access to these products on a daily basis than restaurant foods. If the true goal is to improve public health for citizens of all ages, then focusing solely on foodservice establishments seems unfair and shortsighted.

For these reasons, we support an amended version of House Bill 567 that would eliminate trans fat in both restaurant and retail packaged foods.

Respectfully submitted,

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