

September 9, 2026

The Honorable John R. Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Thune, Speaker Johnson, Minority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader Jeffries:

We, the undersigned organizations representing the full spectrum of the U.S. dairy industry write to express our concerns regarding the Childhood Diabetes Reduction Act of 2026, S. 5026, and its potential unintended consequences for consumers, American agriculture, and the nation's food and dairy supply chains.

Dairy plays a vital role in a balanced, nutrient-rich diet, providing 13 essential vitamins and minerals that support overall health and well-being. The U.S. dairy industry contributes significantly to the American economy, supporting more than three million American jobs and contributes \$779 billion to the U.S. economy. We share a strong commitment to ensuring that Americans have access to safe, affordable, nutritious foods and that federal nutrition policy is grounded in sound science and clear consistent information for consumers.

With these priorities in mind, we request Congress carefully consider the potentially harmful consequences of this legislation. We believe this bill could confuse consumers with the potential of causing them to gravitate away from nutrient dense dairy products, negatively impacting dairy farmers, processors, manufacturers and businesses across the dairy supply chain.

S. 5026 advanced out of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee on July 22. The bill creates definitions, including a broad definition for "ultra processed foods", and establishes a front-of-package-warning label requirement for any food products containing ingredients captured in this definition. The stated intent of this mandated front of package warning label is to inform consumers of the health risks associated with qualifying products including that the consumption of those products may be linked to childhood obesity and diabetes. Under this bill's definitions, warning labels would be required for whole milk (flavored and unflavored), any and all cheese and ice cream, and most yogurts and other cultured dairy products. The only exceptions would potentially be plain, non-fat or low-fat milk or some plain, low-fat yogurts.

As the United States faces increasing concerns about chronic diet-related diseases and food insecurity, policies that promote the consumption of nutritious dairy products can help

improve public health outcomes for Americans. Dairy products including milk, cheese and yogurt are rich sources of high-quality protein, calcium and other key nutrients, making them a cornerstone of dietary recommendations. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) continue to recognize dairy as a core food group because of its unique health benefits. Yet most Americans do not consume enough dairy to meet current DGA recommendations. The 2025-30 DGAs, released in January 2026, state that nearly all Americans, including 67.3% to 93.9% of school-aged children, fall short of meeting recommended daily intake levels for dairy. Importantly, dairy products such as yogurt have been proven to reduce the risk of diabetes onsetⁱ, and cottage cheese provides protein density and live cultures which promote gut health of consumers. Yet, the breadth of the definition means that many familiar, nutrient dense dairy foods could carry a front of package warning label despite their established role in healthy dietary patterns.

The expansive approach taken by S. 5026 would do little to help consumers make more informed choices about their food choices. Instead, the bill risks creating consumer confusion specifically regarding nutrient-dense dairy products long recognized as an important part of healthy diets, providing limited value to consumers while undermining confidence in nutritious foods. The dairy industry is united in opposition to S. 5026. We respectfully urge congressional leaders to carefully consider the negative consequences this legislation could have for American consumers, dairy farmers and businesses, and the rural communities where dairy foods are produced and manufactured.

Respectfully,

AE Dairy
Agri-Mark, Inc
Agropur US
Associated Milk Producers, Inc.
Aurora Organic Dairy
Bel Brands USA
Biery Cheese Company
California Dairies, Inc.
Center for Dairy Excellence
Cheese Merchants
Colorado Dairy Farmers
Cream-O-Land Dairies
CROPP Cooperative
Crystal Creamery
Crystal Farms
Dairy Farmers of America
Dairy Institute of California
Diversified Foods, Inc.
Edge Dairy Farmer Cooperative
Foremost Farms USA
Galloway Company
Georgia Milk Producers
Glanbia Nutritionals

Graeter's Ice Cream Company
Grande Cheese
Grassland Dairy Products, Inc.
Great Lakes Cheese
Hiland Dairy
Hilmar Cheese Company
Hollandia Dairy
Horizon Organic Dairy
HP Hood
Idaho Dairywomen's Association
Idaho Milk Products
Indiana Dairy Producers
International Dairy Foods Association
Kansas Dairy Association
Kansas Livestock Association
Klondike Cheese Co.
Lactalis USA
Lanco-Pennland Quality Milk Producers
Leprino Foods Company
Lifeway Foods
Marathon Cheese Corporation
Maryland & Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative
Masters Gallery Foods, Inc.
Meadow Gold Dairy
Miceli Dairy Products Company
Michigan Milk Producers Association
Midwest Dairy Coalition
Milk Producers Council
Minerva Dairy
Nasonville Dairy, Inc.
National Milk Producers Federation
North Carolina Dairy Producers Association
Northeast Dairy Farmers Cooperative
Northeast Dairy Foods & Suppliers Associations
Ohio Dairy Producers Association
Oregon Dairy Farmers Association
Plains Dairy
Prairie Farms Dairy
Reed's Dairy
Saputo
Sargento Foods Inc.
Sartori Cheese
Schneider's Dairy, Inc.
Schreiber Foods
Schuman Cheese
South East Dairy Farmers Association

The Kroger Company
United Dairy
Tennessee Dairy Products of America
United Dairymen of Arizona
Upstate Niagara Cooperative, Inc.
Valley Queen Cheese
Virginia State Dairymen's Association
Washington State Dairy Federation
Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association

CC:

Sen. Bill Cassidy, Chairman, U.S Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

Rep. Brett Guthrie, Chairman, U.S House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee

Sen. Bernie Sanders, Ranking Member, U.S Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions

Rep. Frank Pallone, Ranking Member, U.S House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee

¹In 2024, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a new qualified health claim linking the consumption of yogurt with a reduction in risk of type 2 diabetes. <https://www.fda.gov/media/176608/download?attachment>