

Dear Honorable Chairman and Honorable Legco Council Members,

As a long-time resident (14 yrs) in Hong Kong, I can remember SEARCHING in vain for the most nutritious foods to feed my family, to today, having a plethora of healthy food choices at my fingertips, which rivals many INTERNATIONAL CITIES.

I am a consumer who reads nutritional labels on all packaged foods. I make my purchasing decisions based on these labels and with the help of the nutritional claims. I not only shop in Great, ThreeSixty, CitySuper and Oliver's, but also frequent local supermarkets, as well as the Wet Market in Wanchai.

I am here today, because the proposed Nutritional Food Labeling Scheme, as it is written, will affect me PERSONALLY. I also speak for thousands of consumers, who have signed petitions and attended informational meetings, who cannot believe this is about to happen in HK. This is personal to them, too.

I have recently gone through my kitchen cabinets and pulled out everything that would no longer meet the labeling requirements of the New Label Law and found **OVER 34 items**.

Among them were all 5 boxes of LOW FAT/LOW SUGAR breakfast cereals, the OMEGA 3 Rich, New Zealand Smoked Salmon, Philadelphia LIGHT Cream Cheese, all of the LOW FAT yogurts and the 0 TRANS FAT, ALL NATURAL BELGIAN WAFFLE MIX which is my daughter, Alexi's favorite treat.

I am confident, from the clearly stated nutritional information on all of these products from Australia, Europe, NZ, Japan and the US, that they are bound by law to be the truth, and in accordance with the laws from the country of origin.

In my understanding, The Food Labeling Scheme has great intentions: to help consumers make informed choices, to encourage manufacturers to apply sound nutritional principles in the formation of foods and to regulate misleading or deceptive labels or claims. In addition, I agree that Hong Kong needs a labeling standard and should enact such a label law that will

help the consumers, like me, who read labels to make the healthiest choices for our families.

But the Proposed Nutritional Labeling Law is so UNIQUE, that no other country's labels comply with it. That means that local importers or retailers will have to re-test and re-label for the HK market alone because the HK market is too small for overseas manufacturers to re-label their products for Hong Kong. Therefore many of these small volume products WILL surely disappear because the sales volume of these products are not sufficient to justify the costs of testing and re-labeling. NEW healthy products with nutritional claims on their packaging will NEVER even enter the market place.

Over the weekend I have seen an English translation of the results from the recent government survey on this very issue. I shared it with my 14 yr old son, Skyler, who will miss his favorite breakfast cereals if this proposal passes May 29th. He questioned the questions. We discussed that we, would have also said YES, to these very general and misleading questions. There is no mention of which products would be affected by the proposed scheme. Nowhere in the survey, does it mention that LOW FAT, LOW SODIUM, LOW CHOLESTEROL, FAT FREE, 0 TRANS FATS, OMEGA 3's, HIGH FIBRE, CALCIUM RICH, products would be targeted and sacrificed by the implementation of this proposed nutritional labeling scheme.

I DEPEND on these **Nutritional Claims** to help me CHOOSE the most nutritious foods for my family. Is there not a way to amend the Proposal in order to keep HEALTHY, NUTRITIOUS, DIETARY necessity products in Hong Kong? What will my friends do who have children with serious allergies or medical conditions such as diabetes, that call for LOW SODIUM or LOW FAT diets? Their food choices are soon to be gone.

Hong Kong has become my home. I am invested in this community. My children have attended both Lingnan and the German Swiss International School. The ability to experience different cultures is the hallmark of a great International City. Today, Hong Kong can pride its self on being able to feed the international population that calls HK home. But if I or the hundreds of thousands of other international and local HK residents, who enjoy all that HK has to offer us, can no longer feed our families with global nutritious food options, our quality of life will be greatly and needlessly diminished.

We would all welcome A new labeling law. But THIS proposed labeling law would be a great leap backward to the narrow range of products available to all of us, 14 years ago. Please find a way to keep Hong Kong going forward, with a new nutritional labeling law that would maintain access to our healthy foods and also accommodate international labeling differences. Consider a law that keeps the market OPEN to NEW nutritious foods as they come to market. We all believe the Hong Kong Government CAN find a way to inform Hong Kong consumers, while still accommodating these international labeling standard differences.

As a truly international city, our supermarkets and specialty stores need to be able to offer the breath of new and old nutritious products that sophisticated, health conscious Hong Kong consumers have come to expect.

Respectfully yours,

Ellen M. Friedlander
Permanent HK Resident