



November 14, 2018

The Honourable Ginette Petitpas-Taylor
Minister of Health

Dear Minister:

The Atlantic Chamber of Commerce is writing to advise you of our members' concerns regarding Health Canada's Front of Package Nutrition Labelling initiative.

Many of our local chamber members are involved in the production, processing and sale of agriculture and agrifood products. As responsible business owners their interests are aligned with the objectives of Health Canada to improving health outcomes by supporting healthy eating choices. However, the current proposal to require warning labels on products that surpass 15% of the daily recommended intake of only three nutritional ingredients will put our producers out of step with their international competitors.

We recognize that improving the health of Canadians is in the best interests of producers and consumers and will contribute to better control over the cost of providing public health services. We submit the desired outcomes can be better achieved by developing internationally recognized and evidence-based balanced standards for providing nutritional information.

In keeping with your government's goal of increasing international trade and growing the agrifood sector, Canada should pursue an agreement on standards with our international trading partners to avoid putting exports, jobs and investments at risk. Industry accepted standards, such as the nutritional facts table can be built upon to ensure consumers make informed purchase decisions while not red-lighting products that, consumed responsibly, can contribute to a healthy diet.



Atlantic Chamber
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We urge the federal government to continue to pursue efforts to inform consumers but expand the educational efforts to a complete assessment of value of each food product. The unintended effect of highlighting only sugar, saturated fats, and sodium is that consumers' initial reaction will be to reject a product that includes a stark warning on its label. Examples of more balanced voluntary labelling initiatives exist in the UK, Australia and even the US.

In light of the impact on consumers and the agrifood sector we urge you to work with your government colleagues on a revised non-regulatory approach to enhancing nutritional reporting standards in the interest of achieving healthy eating and economic growth objectives simultaneously. We are convinced that our goals can be achieved more effectively by pursuing regulatory alignment with our trading partners and avoid creating new obstacles to growing our agrifood sector.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheri Somerville".

Sheri Somerville
CEO Atlantic Chamber of Commerce

cc. The Honourable Lawrence MacAulay
Minister of Agriculture