Consumer Brands Association

MEMORANDUM

To: Massachusetts Joint Committee on Public Health
From: Consumer Brands Association
Re: Opposition to MA Senate Bill 1531 – Preserving a National, Science-Based Food Safety System
Date: September 9, 2025

Massachusetts Senate Bill 1531, while well-intentioned, poses significant risks to the affordability, safety, and functionality of our food system—especially for schools.

The Consumer Brands Association, representing America's trusted food, beverage, and consumer product companies, urges the Committee to oppose Senate Bill 1531. Our members produce safe, nutritious, and affordable products relied on by families across Massachusetts and the country. This bill would unnecessarily restrict access to FDA-approved ingredients and create burdensome, inconsistent regulations for local school systems without a demonstrated public health benefit.

The FDA Is Doing Its Job to Ensure Our Food Is Safe
The FDA maintains a rigorous, science-based process for evaluating food additives. Ingredients approved by the FDA undergo extensive review, including toxicological assessments and exposure analysis, to ensure they meet safety standards for all populations. By banning ingredients like FD&C colors, Senate Bill 1531 undermines the established federal framework for evaluating food safety. This approach risks undermining public confidence in the FDA and sets a precedent for fragmented, state-by-state regulation of food ingredients. A unified federal system is essential to maintaining consistency, safety, and transparency across the food supply.

USDA Just Finalized Updated School Nutrition Standards
After years of work and robust public engagement, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued its final rule on April 24, 2024, updating school nutrition requirements. These standards reflect the latest science on sodium, sugar, whole grains, and more and reinforce the agency's leadership role in shaping healthy eating habits through evidence-based regulation. These updates, which will take effect in 2025, already raise the nutritional baseline for school meals and a la carte offerings and should continue to remain as the standard for regulatory authority over school nutrition guidelines and standards.

Impact on Schools and Food Access
Massachusetts schools rely on shelf-stable, affordable products to meet student needs and budget constraints. Banning widely used, FDA-approved additives would limit product availability, increase procurement costs, and reduce flexibility in school meal planning. These changes could

disproportionately affect students in underserved communities and strain school nutrition budgets already stretched by rising food costs. Moreover, Senate Bill 1531's restrictions would complicate compliance for school districts and food manufacturers alike, requiring reformulation of products and new labeling protocols without a demonstrated public health benefit.

Massachusetts Needs Consistency, Not a Patchwork Approach

Senate Bill 1531 would create a state-level ban that conflicts with national food safety policy, increasing costs for families, disrupting school food service operations, and undermining consumer trust.
This is a step toward a patchwork of conflicting state regulations, something that food safety experts, consumer advocates, and industry alike have long warned against. Only a unified, science-driven federal system can provide the consistency and confidence the public deserves.

Thank you for the opportunity to reiterate our significant concerns with House Bill 539. Please reach out to Greg Costa, gcosta@consumerbrandsassociation.org, with any questions.

Respectfully,

Greg Costa

Senior Director of State Affairs, Consumer Brands Association