



Date: Monday, February 23, 2009

Time 2:00 PM

Place: CR 325

To: Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Rep. Robert N. Herkes, Chair

Rep. Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

To: Committee on Judiciary

Rep. Jon Riki Karamatsu, Chair

Rep. Ken Ito, Vice Chair

From: Hawaii Food Industry Association

Dick Botti, President and Lauren Zirbel, Government Relations

Re: HB 1611, HD 1 Relating to Labeling of Meat and Fish Products

HFIA objects to this measure. These labeling requirements are not universal across the United States; thus, meat and fish products which are imported must be labeled once they arrive at the grocery store. This would require a significant investment in labor to accomplish. Grocers are already overwhelmed and burdened by a multitude of government labeling requirements. This bill will cost time and money that the food industry does not have during this economic recession.

Carbon monoxide is often used in modified atmosphere packaging (MAP) to maintain food quality by altering the atmospheric conditions within the package; replacing air with inert gasses and then heat sealing products. This low-oxygen packaging system extends the shelf-life of meat and other perishable foods by up to 15 days, but also keeps meat looking fresh even when it isn't. Labeling MAP packaged foods is unnecessary because these products are regarded as safe by the FDA and MAP packaged foods have a clearly labeled expiration date posted on all fresh meat and fish products. These products are not a danger to the consumer yet by forcing mandatory labeling of MAP products the State is implying to the consumer that they are.

This is an unnecessary and costly measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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