



March 14, 2019

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Plant Based Foods Association Statement on the Introduction of the Dairy Pride Act of 2019

Leading Food Trade Association Calls Legislation "Misguided and Unconstitutional"

Washington, DC – The following is a statement by Michele Simon, executive director of the Plant Based Foods Association, which represents more than 130 plant-based food companies:

In an era of increasing innovation in the food industry, this legislation would send a chilling message to small and emerging businesses: The marketplace is rigged against you in favor of large and powerful special interests.

This mean-spirited bill would harm innovative plant-based food companies that are growing rapidly, providing new, great-tasting options for consumers. This bill would declare the free market dead with the promotion of protectionist policies pushed by dairy-state politicians and their lobbyists.

And consumers would ultimately be harmed by causing disruption and fewer options in the market at a time when consumer tastes are rapidly changing.

This bill is a solution in search of a problem: consumers are not confused about plant-based milk. They are purposefully seeking out plant-based dairy alternatives for a variety of individual reasons. Moreover, about half of households are purchasing both plant-based and cow-based milk. Similar legislation appropriately went nowhere in previous the Congress, and restarting this effort now seems like a desperate move by the dairy lobby.

The FDA is currently reviewing more than 13,000 comments that were submitted as part of the agency's initiative to look at use of dairy terms in plant-based foods. Most comments are in favor of continuing to allow use of the term milk on plant-based alternatives. The FDA's work should be allowed to proceed without Congressional interference.

Further, PBFA has put forward [voluntary labeling guidelines](#) for plant-based milk to promote consistency of labeling across the industry.

This bill is also unconstitutional as a clear violation of the First Amendment, infringing on the free speech rights of plant-based food companies to communicate with their customers in a truthful, non-misleading manner.



Finally, sadly, this bill does nothing to help dairy farmers, who are in fact struggling every day. PBFA empathizes with the economic hardship faced by many of America's dairy farmers. Tragically, the dairy lobby is avoiding their industry's real economic troubles: over-production, consolidation, corporate takeover of family farms, and a lack of innovation. It may be easier to blame their troubles on the plant-based foods industry but it's not helpful or even accurate. It's a disingenuous distraction from real issues, and a disservice to dairy farmers.

Consumers have settled this debate, if there ever was one, and it's time for the dairy lobby to move on and address real, fundamental structural and economic problems facing America's dairy farmers.

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