

Deni's Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Deni Taveras

Position: FAV

DENI TAVERAS
Legislative District 47B
Prince George's County

Health and Government
Operations Committee

Subcommittees

Government Operations
and Health Facilities

Insurance and Pharmaceuticals



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 206
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3101 • 301-858-3101
800-492-7122 Ext. 3101
Deni.Taveras@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Baby Food Labeling - Statement Regarding Toxic Heavy Metal Testing - Terminology - HB 443
Testimony of Maryland State Delegate Deni Taveras

Thank you, Chair Pena-Melnyk, and esteemed committee members. I am here to request your favorable report on HB 443, Baby Food Labeling - Statement Regarding Toxic Heavy Metal Testing - Terminology.

I am here today to express my strong support for HB 443, regarding baby food labeling. This bill proposes a crucial update to the terminology used on these labels, changing "toxic heavy metal" to "toxic element." Moreover, this is a technical change and is not changing the content of the bill. We have been working closely with the State of California on this issue, and this change aligns with similar legislation they have enacted. This harmonization of language will ensure consistency and clarity for consumers, especially as products are distributed across state lines. It also reflects a more accurate and accessible way to communicate the potential risks associated with these elements. I urge the committee for a favorable report on In closing, I ask this esteemed committee for your favorable report on HB 443.

HB0443 - Baby Food Labeling – Statement Regarding

Uploaded by: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

Position: FAV



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

Lowe House Office Building, 6 Bladen Street, Room 200 · Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Phone 410-841-3374 | 301-858-3374 · 800-492-7122 Ext. 3374 · Fax 410-841-3342 | 301-858-3342
latino.caucus@house.state.md.us · www.mdlatinocaucus.org

ASHANTI MARTINEZ, CHAIR

GABRIEL ACEVERO, VICE-CHAIR

DENI TAVERAS, TREASURER

JOE VOGEL, SECRETARY

JASON A. AVILA GARCIA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair
Delegate Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair
Health and Government Operations Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

DATE: February 5, 2025

RE: HB0443 – Baby Food Labeling – Statement Regarding Toxic Heavy Metal Testing – Terminology

The MLLC supports HB443 – Baby Food Labeling – Statement Regarding Toxic Heavy Metal Testing – Terminology

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB443.

Latino families represent a significant proportion of those participating in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, with approximately 36.4% of WIC-eligible individuals in 2021 identifying as Hispanic/Latino.¹ Since WIC provides access to baby food products, these families are more likely to encounter foods potentially containing toxic elements. By requiring transparent testing and clear labeling of baby food, this bill addresses these risks and helps families to make informed choices about the products they purchase.

This bill proposes a minor amendment to Maryland's baby food labeling requirements by replacing the term "toxic heavy metal" with "toxic element" and "quick response (QR)" with "QR" on product labels. Under the existing law, baby food exceeding U.S. FDA-established toxic heavy metal limits cannot be sold in the state. Manufacturers are required to test representative samples monthly for toxic elements such as arsenic, cadmium, lead, and mercury using accredited laboratories. With Latino communities more likely to come into contact with foods that contain higher levels of toxic elements, this bill is an important step in improving the safety and quality of baby food for Latino communities.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB443.

¹ [U.S. Department of Agriculture. "National and State Level Estimates of WIC Eligibility and Program Reach in 2021." Food and Nutrition Service U.S. Department of Agriculture, 24 July 2024.](#)

HB 443 - MDH - FIN - LOI.docx (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Meghan Lynch

Position: INFO



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Ryan Moran, DrPH, MHSA, Acting Secretary

March 19, 2025

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: House Bill (HB) 443 – Baby Food Labeling - Statement Regarding Toxic Heavy Metal Testing - Terminology — Letter of Information

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Health (the Department) respectfully submits this letter of information for HB 443 – Baby Food Labeling - Statement Regarding Toxic Heavy Metal Testing - Terminology. HB 443 changes the language required on the labels of baby food products from “toxic heavy metal” to “toxic element”, and abbreviates “Quick Response (QR)” to “QR.” The bill updates the current language in §21–330.4 of the Health-General Article to align with the California state statute on which the original Maryland legislation was modeled.

HB 443, as written, will assist industry in complying concurrently with the Maryland statute and the California statute. By amending Maryland’s language to use the same terminology as California’s requirements for toxic element testing and labeling of baby foods, this bill allows manufacturers to label their products without disparate labeling requirements and burdensome label changes.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs, at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Ryan Moran, DrPH, MHSA
Acting Secretary