



**2025 SESSION
POSITION PAPER**

BILL: HB 1449 – Public Health – Milk Products – Direct-to-Consumer Sale of Raw Milk for Human Consumption

COMMITTEE: House – Health and Government Operations Committee

POSITION: Letter of Opposition

BILL ANALYSIS: HB 1449 would exclude sales of raw milk for human consumption from State regulation of milk products, require a person to obtain a permit from the Secretary of Health before selling raw milk direct to the consumer for human consumption, and establish related requirements for raw milk produced and sold direct to the consumer for human consumption in Maryland.

POSITION RATIONALE: The Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) strongly opposes HB 1449. The sale of raw milk directly to consumers for human consumption presents a clear and present danger to the public's health that will result in preventable disease and death. There is no regimen of testing and surveillance that will prevent the pathogenic organisms in raw milk. The concerns are further complicated by the spread of avian flu, currently infecting dairy cattle across the country and causing illness that can be spread by raw milk.

According to the CDC, there are outbreaks in the United States every year caused by the consumption of raw milk. From 1998-2018, there were 202 documented outbreaks, with a total of 2,645 individuals becoming ill and 228 people requiring hospitalizations as a result of raw milk consumption. Listeriosis, a severe food-borne illness that results from consumption of foods contaminated with *L. monocytogenes*, causes 1,600 cases of disease and 260 deaths annually.^[1] Raw milk is one of the most common environments for the transmission of *L. monocytogenes* ^[2].

Pasteurization prevents harmful diseases, such as Salmonella, E.coli, Listeria, and Campylobacter, typically associated with ingesting raw milk. Pasteurization does not lead to the creation of allergens and does not impact the nutritional value of the milk. There is no credible scientific evidence that the consumption of raw milk provides sufficient benefit to outweigh the well-documented dangers.

HB 1449 would dismantle consumer protections against illnesses associated with raw milk consumption. Removing these protections at a time of heightened risk, especially in light of the rampant spread of bird flu in dairy cattle across the country, is shortsighted and ill advised. It is a significant step backward for food safety and public health that will imperil the health and lives of Maryland citizens.

For these reasons, the Maryland Association of County Health Officers submits this Letter of Opposition for HB 1449. For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, MACHO Executive Director, at rmaiora1@jhu.edu or 410-937-1433. *This communication reflects the position of MACHO.*

1 <https://www.cdc.gov/listeria/index.html>

2 Sarfraz M., Ashraf Y., Ashraf S. A review: prevalence and antimicrobial susceptibility profile of listeria species in milk products. Matrix Science Medica. 2017;1(1):3–9. doi: 10.26480/msm.01.2017.03.09.