

Retail Campaign Toolkit ~ for immediate use.



save our supplements
before it's too late

14th June 2010

~ COME ON RETAILERS ~ TIME IS RUNNING OUT FOR HIGH POTENCY SUPPLEMENTS Keep up the pressure after the General Election

Thank you for all your help with our campaign in the run up the General Election. Through you we managed to keep hundreds of Parliamentary Candidates informed of our campaign to temporarily block the now imminent threat by the European Union to ban hundreds of higher potency vitamin and mineral supplements. We urgently need you to take further action, immediately, to ensure that your local MP remains aware of this issue.

We have kept it simple. Please write to your local MP and explain just why your business and its profitability would be undermined if you lost the right to sell a wide range of popular higher potency vitamin & mineral supplements which have been on the market for many years and are accepted as safe by the Food Standards Agency.

It is important that all MPs are aware from an early stage in this Parliament of the threats posed to your business, and for them to show their support by signing the new Early Day Motion 146. In addition, they need to put pressure on Anne Milton MP, the new Public Health Minister to protect this industry and its products, and on John Dalli, the European Health Commissioner.

To make this easy for you this toolkit includes:

1. a draft letter for you to send to your local MP, which you may wish to personalise
2. a copy of the new EDM 146 to enclose with that letter
3. a copy of the updated CHC Briefing Note which you also may want to enclose

If you don't know which constituency you are in, or the name of your MP, you can find that information at www.theyworkforyou.com or by telephoning 020 7219 4272.

For further information:

Sue Croft, Director Consumers for Health Choice: Tel: 01769 581612 or 07860 286425

www.consumersforhealthchoice.com

Draft Letter to send to your local MP

Name of MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 1AA

DATE

Dear [Salutation]

Congratulations on your recent election! As a local health food retailer, I am continuing to support the Save-our-Supplements campaign being run by Consumers for Health Choice (CHC). The campaign highlights the threat to the continued availability of higher potency vitamin and mineral supplements which may be banned in the near future by the European Union. Such a development would seriously damage my business, lead to the closure of around 700 health food stores across Britain and the loss of thousands of retail and manufacturing jobs, as well as unnecessarily restricting consumer choice.

I need your help to raise our concerns at the highest level: in particular, with Anne Milton MP, the recently appointed Public Health Minister. Please encourage her to ensure that much more is done to make the UK's voice heard on these issues in Europe, including in discussions with other Member States and the Commission. Unfortunately, Food Standards Agency officials have failed to put in the negotiating efforts necessary if we are to achieve the UK's objectives for this legislation.

I also ask that you write to the European Commissioner responsible for the setting of maximum permitted levels, John Dalli, highlighting the impact that restrictive figures would have on consumer choice, small businesses and jobs here in the UK. If you could encourage your colleagues to also write, that can only be helpful.

Finally, I ask that you show your support for our campaign by signing Early Day Motion 146, a copy of which is enclosed for your convenience. I also enclose a copy of CHC's briefing note which explains the issue in more detail.

Please give my business and my staff who are your constituents your support.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.

With kind regards and very best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Your Name

Name & Address of your Store

Enclosed:

- a. Early Day Motion 146
- b. CHC Briefing Note

Kate Hoey
Caroline Lucas
Robert Halfon
John Hemming
Mr Mike Weir
Jonathan Edwards

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That this House notes the setting of maximum permitted levels for vitamins and minerals in food supplements under the provisions of Article 5 of the Food Supplements Directive remains work in progress on the part of the European Commission; observes that millions of United Kingdom consumers have registered with their Members of Parliament their deep concern about the threat to the continued availability of many safe and popular higher potency supplements; further notes that industry has calculated that a restrictive interpretation of the legislation could lead to the closure of 700 health food stores and the loss of 4,000 jobs in the sector; further notes that the policy of the Conservative Party in the run up to the General Election was firm opposition to this measure and that of the Liberal Democrat Shadow Secretary of State was strong support for the freedom of consumers to choose; and looks to the Ministers of the new Coalition Government to honour the commitments of their parties and ensure that no food supplements are removed from the UK market as a result of this burdensome measure.

The Food Supplements Directive

Briefing Note for Policy Makers, May 2010



Maximum Permitted Levels – consumers need your support!

1. The Food Supplements Directive

The Directive* was finalised and Published in the Official Journal in May 2002. At present it deals with **vitamin and mineral supplements** (with provision for extension to other categories in the future). The two key areas are:

- a. It establishes lists of permitted nutrients and nutrient sources.
- b. It provides for the setting of maximum permitted levels at which such nutrients may be present.

Despite welcome interventions by Ministers, the outcome will be the removal from the UK market of thousands of safe and popular products unless there are substantial positive developments.

2. Maximum Permitted Levels

Article 5 of the Directive provides that maximum permitted levels (MPLs) for nutrients will be set taking into account several factors. That process first required European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) to produce a report on the maximum safe level of intake for each nutrient.

EFSA's work is complete. The EFSA figures have gone to the Commission, which will use them as the **starting point** for producing a list of proposed maximum permitted levels for nutrients in supplements. The figures will then be considered by the Member States in Standing Committee.

So the commission will produce figures based on safety as the UK is asking?

No. The Commission will start with the Upper Safe Level and "risk manage" that figure downwards to take into account nutrients present in other food sources, including those added to fortified foods. It will also "take into account" the "population reference intake" (the daily amount established as necessary for avoiding disease of nutritional deficiency, nothing to do with safety or optimum nutrition). The Directive does not define what "take into account" actually means, giving the Commission considerable flexibility.

Is this all speculation and years away?

No. It is not speculation – and it is not years away. The process has been well underway for sometime and must be influenced **now**. The Commission has published consultation papers and continues with a programme of meetings with all 27 Member States to discuss the setting of dose levels.

The Commission is expected to come forward with specific proposals for Maximum Permitted Levels in the next few months. That gives very little time for consultation and actions.

Latest news from the Commission is that doses will be set at low levels and that the UK can expect to lose access to higher potency supplements. The Commission sees this as the acceptable price to be paid by the UK for achieving the single market. This would mean around 700 health food stores closing and thousands of jobs being lost.

3. So what happens now?

In opposition the Conservatives and Lib Dems were very supportive of our objectives. Now in office, their new Government needs urgently to engage on these matters at a political level in Europe to persuade the Commission to bring forward and other Member States to support a more proportionate interpretation of the legislation.

The UK Food Standards Agency has agreed to find a solution that permits the continued availability of higher potency supplements on the UK market. **However, there is little evidence so far of success on the part of the Agency in persuading either the Commission or other Member States to support its position. It needs considerably to "up its game".**

4. What Can our Elected Representatives do to help?

a. Please ask the Minister immediately to redouble the UK's efforts to achieve an acceptable outcome.

b. Please write to the Health Commissioner in Europe, asking him to ensure that safe and popular higher potency food supplements remain easily available to consumers:

Commissioner John Dalli
Health and Consumer Protection Directorate
EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DG Health and Consumer Protection
B-1049 BRUSSELS

5. Where can I find out more?

Consumers for Health Choice
Southbank House, Black Prince Road, London SE1 7SJ
Tel: 020 7463 0690
www.consumersforhealthchoice.com

* <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32002L0046:EN:HTML>