



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P.O. BOX 8952 • MADISON, WI 53708

June 16, 2014

Margaret A. Hamburg, M.D.
Commissioner of Food and Drugs
10903 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20993

Dear Dr. Hamburg,

We write today to express our concerns over the US Food and Drug Administration's recent statements regarding the use of wooden boards in aging cheese.

As you may know, in recent years there has been a growing market nationwide for specialty foods and beverages. From craft beers to artisan cheeses – Wisconsin is home to some of the best specialty food and beverage products in the United States.

This is particularly true for our cheese. We are fortunate to have an unparalleled tradition of cheese making here in Wisconsin. The high quality of our products not only supports our agriculture industry and creates jobs for local workers across Wisconsin, but it pumps tourism dollars into many of our more rural communities.

We are grateful that the FDA clarified their position on this issue last week. However, that being said, a ban on the use of wooden boards could have a devastating effect on Wisconsin's cheese industry. According to the Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, at least 33 million pounds of cheese currently rests on wooden boards in Wisconsin. This is a practice that is well-accepted by the industry and has been used for well over one hundred years. Furthermore, Wisconsin already has a protocol established through the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection which requires certain food safety protections and helps prevent bacterial outbreaks.

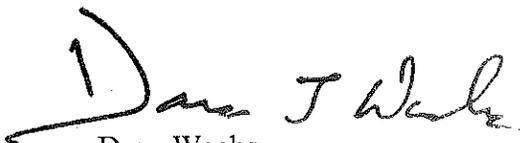
We strongly encourage you to re-examine any consideration of prohibiting the use of wooden boards for aging cheese. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us directly.

Sincerely,

Janis Ringhand
State Representative
45th Assembly District

Julie Lassa
State Senator
24th Senate District

Stephen Smith
State Representative
75th Assembly District



Dana Wachs
State Representative
91st Assembly District



John Nygren
State Representative
89th Assembly District



Chris Danou
State Representative
92nd Assembly District



Tim Carpenter
State Senator
3rd Senate District



Fred Risser
State Senator
26th Senate District



Rob Cowles
State Senator
2nd Senate District

Janet Bewley
State Representative
74th Assembly District



Eric Genrich
State Representative
90th Assembly District



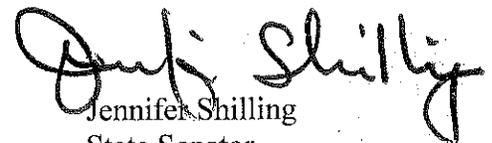
Robb Kahl
State Representative
47th Assembly District



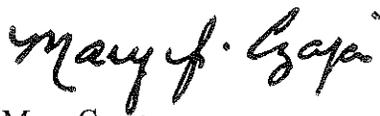
Chris Larson
State Senator
7th Senate District



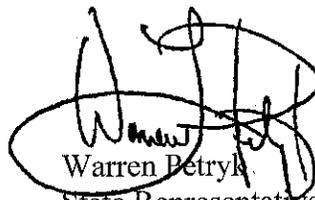
Bob Jauch
State Senator
25th Senate District



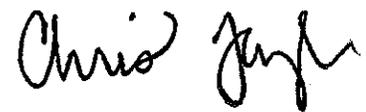
Jennifer Shilling
State Senator
32nd Senate District



Mary Czaja
State Representative
35th Assembly District



Warren Petryk
State Representative
93rd Assembly District



Chris Taylor
State Representative
76th Assembly District



Dave Hansen
State Senator
30th Senate District



Kathleen Vinehout
State Senator
31st Senate District



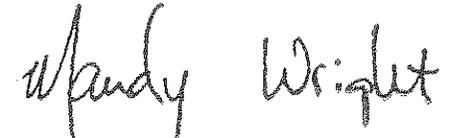
Joe Leibham
State Senator
9th Senate District



Melissa Sargent
State Representative
48th Assembly District



Amy Sue Vruwink
State Representative
70th Assembly District



Mandy Wright
State Representative
85th Assembly District

Tod Ohnstad

Tod Ohnstad
State Representative
65th Assembly District

Sondy Pope

Sondy Pope
State Representative
80th Assembly District

Howard Marklein

Howard Marklein
State Representative
51st Assembly District

Dianne Hesselbein

Dianne Hesselbein
State Representative
79th Assembly District

Brett Hulsey

Brett Hulsey
State Representative
78th Assembly District

Terese Berceau

Terese Berceau
State Representative
77th Assembly District