

Dear Chairman Leibowitz,

I am writing to express my opposition to the Preliminary Proposed Nutrition Principles to Food Marketed to Children by the Interagency Working Group (IWG), and strongly urge the withdrawal of these marketing restrictions.

The 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act directed the FTC, USDA, FDA, and CDC to complete a study and provide recommendations to Congress. Instead, the IWG has proposed marketing restrictions of many healthy foods, including most soups, cereals, breads, and cheese. The IWG's standards are more restrictive than the standards for foods sold under the school lunch program, the WIC program, and contradict the Administration's own food recommendations to Americans.

The IWG should withdraw its proposed food marketing restrictions.

I am a mom of two healthy boys who have grown up eating various brands and types of soups, cereals, breads and cheese. Teaching them about healthy nutrition is my and my husband's responsibility – one that we assumed when we chose to bring our kids into this world. It is our responsibility to seek advice and ensure they are eating and being taught how to eat healthfully, not the government or any agencies' or agents of the government. It is a parental responsibility!

While I appreciate having a credible information resource and governing agency for healthy nutrition and food safety, and having an agency that governs responsible communications in this country, it seems the two are not working together for the greater good. In fact, they do not appear to even be aligned as to the same standards and restrictions regarding the same topic. How can you expect the general public to follow the guidance of the FDA and FTC when it comes to a topic that the two agencies supposedly collaborated on, when they each have contradictory recommendations? In fact, how can you expect the general public to believe in or have respect for these agencies on any topic? It seems to me that acting on behalf of the greater good for the people of this country deserves more concerted effort and true collaboration to reach alignment on this topic before making recommendations that not only impact the healthful behaviors of the American people, but also impact the livelihood of the many Americans who help produce and provide the food that everyone in this country eats.

As a mom and a human being, I know how important proper nutrition and a healthy diet are. As a food and media consumer who has worked in corporate America for over ten years, I know that collaboration and alignment are the cornerstones of a powerful team. This early effort to impose new restrictions on Food Marketing to kids is not a good reflection on the agencies undertaking this initiative, will only serve to undermine these agencies' credibility, should be considered premature and be put on hold pending completion of the 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act.

Sincerely,  
Karen Neeley, mom of two healthy boys