

Date:

Senator Richard Pan  
Senate Health Committee  
Room 2191, State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 651 – Reducing Exposure to Synthetic Food Dyes Act - SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Pan:

[Name of your organization] supports SB 651 by Senator Wieckowski, the *Reducing Exposure to Synthetic Food Dyes Act*. This bill would require safety warning labels on foods and beverages in California that contain synthetic dyes.

Food companies routinely add synthetic dyes to foods and drinks, especially those heavily marketed to children, who consume more food per pound of body weight than adults. One study found that more than 90% of child-oriented candies, fruit-flavored snacks, and drink mixes contain synthetic dyes.<sup>1</sup>

Multiple studies, including many clinical trials in children, demonstrate that there is a clear link between dyes in food and drinks and adverse behavior in children.<sup>2</sup> This behavior can lead to poor cognitive and academic performance in the classroom.

California's respected Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) carefully and systematically reviewed all of the evidence (human, animal, and mechanistic), conducted its own exposure assessment, and subjected its findings to peer review, in the most sophisticated and rigorous assessment undertaken to date on the relationship between synthetic food dyes and neurobehavioral effects in children, before reaching its conclusions.<sup>3</sup>

With consumer pressure, some conscientious restaurants and retailers such as *Whole Foods* and *Trader Joe's* have taken steps to ensure their food and drink offerings are free from synthetic dyes. However, not every family can equally access dye-free foods. Low-income families often have limited access to fresh produce in their communities, while unhealthy, processed foods and beverage products containing synthetic dyes are abundant and affordable. These synthetic ingredients lack nutritional value and are frequently used as cheap replacements for healthful ingredients.

Specifically, SB 651 will:

- Require that dyed foods inform the consumer that synthetic food dyes are known to cause or worsen behavioral problems in children.
- Apply to a person that manufactures, packages, sells, offers to sell, distributes, or imports for sale or distribution within the state food containing synthetic dyes.
- Require the label to be located on the principal display panel and be prominently placed in a way that can be understood by consumers.
- Require restaurants when selling food with synthetic dyes to include the information on their menus or menu boards.
- Not apply to alcoholic beverages or medical food.

Optional: Include a couple of sentences about why your organization supports and/or cares about SB 651.

All families in California should have access to healthy foods that are nutritious, high quality, and dye free. For these reasons, [Name of your organization] supports SB 651 and respectfully asks for your “Aye” vote on this bill.

Sincerely,

[Your name and title]

cc: Senator Bob Wieckowski

---

<sup>1</sup> Batada A, Jacobson MF. Prevalence of artificial food colors in grocery store products marketed to children. *Clin Pediatr (Phils)*. 2016;55(12):1113-9.

<sup>2</sup> Key studies identified in: Center for Science in the Public Interest. Fact Sheet: The Science Linking Food Dyes with Impacts on Children’s Behavior. January 13, 2016. <https://cspinet.org/resource/science-linking-food-dyes-impacts-childrens-behavior>.

<sup>3</sup> California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. Synthetic Food Dye Risk Assessment. <https://oehha.ca.gov/risk-assessment/synthetic-food-dye-risk-assessment>