

S.2594, the Food Labeling Modernization Act of 2021

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Background

- Celiac disease (CeD) is a serious, genetic autoimmune disorder in which ingesting gluten causes damage to the villi of the small intestine, affecting 1% of the population. Up to 13% of the US population may be affected by non-celiac gluten sensitivity (NCGS), and 23% of adult US shoppers report gluten avoidance in their household. The only treatment for CeD and NCGS is the total elimination of gluten-containing foods, including wheat, barley, and rye sources.
- Adapting to a strict, gluten-free diet is a complex process, where lack of compliance significantly affects mortality in CeD, including a 6x greater risk from non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and a 4x greater risk from small bowel cancer.
- The current Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act does not require ingredients that contain gluten to disclose this on the food label.
- Gluten-containing grains appear under more than a dozen different names on food labels (e.g., "natural flavoring") that do not disclose the presence of wheat, rye or barley, causing consumer confusion.

Food Labeling Modernization Act (S.2594)

- The Food Labeling Modernization Act (FLMA) of 2021 will align labeling regulations with the latest nutrition science and advance national public health priorities through food labeling policies aimed at¹:
 - Encouraging reformulation
 - Countering misleading claims
 - Providing information online
 - Revealing new health information
- This legislation will require disclosure of gluten-containing grains (wheat, barley, and rye) in the ingredient list and/or "Contains" statement on ingredient labels to protect people with celiac disease. Currently, wheat is the only gluten-containing grain required to be disclosed on the food label.
- This labeling will allow concerned consumers to know, for example, that the malt syrup in their food contains barley.
- For the more than 3 million Americans living with celiac disease, that small distinction is an important one.

Support Organizations

- Center for Science in the Public Interest, Celiac Disease Foundation, Beyond Celiac, Gluten Free Watchdog, Gluten Intolerance Group, National Celiac Association, Consumer Reports, Environmental Working Group

Contact

- For more information about this legislation, please contact:
 - Alison_Council@blumenthal.senate.gov.
 - Center for Science in the Public Interest at policy@cspinet.org

¹Center for Science in the Public Interest. Food Labeling Modernization Act of 2021 Fact Sheet. August 4, 2021.