

Christiane S. Sikora
POB 713
22 Yellowstone Meadow Road
Park City, MT 59063

February 15, 2005

To: Montana State Legislators
Re: Country-of-origin labeling

Public health education campaigns, largely sponsored by our government, advise all of us on the importance of paying attention to the types of foods we eat, making certain to select healthful choices. Part of this effort aims to reduce public health care costs, because of the recognition that what we put into our bodies directly impacts our physical and mental well-being.

Unfortunately, making appropriately healthful choices is not always easy for consumers like me. When I purchase food at the supermarket for my family's dinner, I cannot determine where it came from. To know the origin of the foods we eat is very important to us, because of the lack of information regarding the conditions and regulations under which the food products are raised in other parts of the world. In contrast, I know that American producers must observe strict public health regulations to raise high quality meats, grains and produce. As a mother, and a person conscious of my health, I feel the need to know where my food originates.

In addition, we are all concerned about the impacts various industries, including farming and ranching, have on the environment. Studies show without a doubt that these impacts are global, and that pollution in Brazil adversely affects us in the U.S. I try to be conscientious about purchasing products, which are produced under environmentally friendly conditions. Unfortunately, lack of proper labeling makes it virtually impossible to extend my decision to make responsible purchasing choices to the foods we eat. American ranchers and farmers follow strict regulations, designed to protect our environment, in raising their product. Given the choice, those are the products I would purchase.

- Please allow Montanan's to support American ranchers and farmers in their efforts to provide us with healthful food products, grown in an environmentally sound manner.
- Please support consumers like me in our quest to make healthy and responsible choices when we purchase the foods we eat.
- **Please, vote for Country-of-origin labeling, to allow our farmers and ranchers to label their products with pride, and to help consumers to identify imported foods.**

**A Montana Citizen's Endorsement of House Bill 406
The Country of Origin Placarding Act (COOL)**

Sandy Weiss

PO Box 1173

Billings, Montana 59103-1173

As a Montana citizen, I strongly support the Country of Origin Placarding Act, House Bill 406. Montana farmers and ranchers raise high quality, safe food products, including meat, grains, and produce, and consumers should reward farmers and ranchers for their hard work and adherence to public health and environmental standards. Unfortunately, it is difficult for me and other consumers to determine where our food is coming from; meat having a "USDA-approved" stamp doesn't even necessarily mean that it is meat from America. This bill will show support for the independent farmers and ranchers that are vital to Montana's economy. And it should not cost grocery stores very much to label food; all they have to do is print labels differently.

I believe all consumers have the right to know who produced the food that we are about to buy, and choose to buy American-made products when possible. I urge Montana legislators to pass this bill. It is only common sense thing to do, especially in light of the problems Canada is having. I personally would not buy Canadian beef by choice and should not have to buy it by chance.

Cody Ferguson

From: Lawrence Heppner [lonetree@nemontel.net]
Sent: Sunday, February 13, 2005 10:42 PM
To: cody@northernplains.org
Subject: House Bill 406-Country of Origin Labeling Act

I would encourage the passage of House Bill 406.

It seems as though most anything consumers purchase from clothes to furniture has a label attached, stating the name of the country where the item was made.

As free trade agreements proliferate, and more and more items are imported into the United States, I feel that consumers should have information available so that they are able to make informed choices.

As a farmer and rancher I feel country of origin labeling would certainly be to my benefit. Since agricultural products can be so easily commingled during the processing and distribution process, there is no way for the consumer to make their preferences in the market place known for 100% Montana and/or United States produced commodities.

If we in Montana are serious about our state's economy, we must do something so that the citizens of Montana and the United States can support our agricultural industries by being able to distinguish what has been produced here, and voting with their dollars in the marketplace.

I urge you to vote for passage of the Country of Origin Labeling Act.

Thank you.

Lawrence Heppner
437 Ueland Rd.
Westby, MT. 59275

My name, is Tom Breitbach and I live in Circle, MT, We raise cattle as well as grains and hay.

I want to thank the House Agriculture Committee for the opportunity to have written comments entered into the hearing on House Bill 406.

We are presently importing meats from South America which receives the USDA stamp of approval and then is probably blended with U.S. beef; If a case of human BSE happened, there would be a huge search to find the source of that contaminated beef. Every consumer has the right to know where the meat they eat comes from.

The national congress has repeatedly negated attempts to pass Country Of Origin Legislation by not funding, making it voluntary or saying it costs too much. If the national lawmakers will not pass this type of legislation, then it is up to state lawmakers to do it, and protect the cattle producers of our state.

Thank you.

A Montana Citizen's Endorsement of House Bill 406
The Country of Origin Placarding Act (COOL)
John and Catherine Michunovich
Billings, Montana

As a consumer living in Billings, Montana, I strongly support the Country of Origin Placarding Act, House Bill 406. Farmers in Montana raise high quality food products, including meat, grains, and produce, and we as consumers should reward them for their hard work and adherence to public health and environmental standards. Unfortunately, it is difficult for me and other consumers to determine where our food is coming from; meat having a "USDA-approved" stamp doesn't even necessarily mean that it is meat from America. I believe the majority of consumers have the right to know who produced the food that we are about to buy, and choose to buy American-made products when possible. I urge Montana legislators to pass this bill.

A Montana Farmer's Endorsement of House Bill 406
The Country of Origin Placarding Act (COOL)
Lila Green
Circle, Montana

As a Montana farmer, I strongly support the Country of Origin Placarding Act, House Bill 406. Farmers like myself in Montana raise high quality food products, including meat, grains, and produce, and consumers should reward farmers and ranchers for our hard work and adherence to public health and environmental standards.

Unfortunately, it is difficult for me as a consumer and other consumers to determine where our food is coming from; meat having a "USDA-approved" stamp doesn't even necessarily mean that it is meat from America. This bill will also show support for the independent farmers and ranchers that are vital to Montana's economy. I believe the majority of consumers have the right to know who produced the food that we are about to buy, and choose to buy American-made products when possible. I urge Montana legislators to pass this bill.

A Montana Farmer's Endorsement of House Bill 406
The Country of Origin Placarding Act (COOL)
Phyllis and Dale Hubing
Circle, Montana

As a Montana rancher, I strongly support the Country of Origin Placarding Act, House Bill 406. Ranchers like myself in Montana raise high quality food products, including meat, grains, and produce, and consumers should reward farmers and ranchers for our hard work and adherence to public health and environmental standards. Unfortunately, it is difficult for me as a consumer and other consumers to determine where our food is coming from; meat having a "USDA-approved" stamp doesn't even necessarily mean that it is meat from America. This bill will also show support for the independent ranchers and farmers that are vital to Montana's economy. I believe the majority of consumers have the right to know who produced the food that we are about to buy, and choose to buy American-made products when possible. I urge Montana legislators to pass this bill.

A Montana Farmer's Endorsement of House Bill 406
The Country of Origin Placarding Act (COOL)
Adolf Zerbe
Billings, Montana

As a Montana farmer, I strongly support the Country of Origin Placarding Act, House Bill 406. Farmers like myself in Montana raise high quality food products, including meat, grains, and produce, and consumers should reward farmers and ranchers for our hard work and adherence to public health and environmental standards.

Unfortunately, it is difficult for me as a consumer and other consumers to determine where our food is coming from; meat having a "USDA-approved" stamp doesn't even necessarily mean that it is meat from America. This bill will also show support for the independent farmers and ranchers that are vital to Montana's economy. I believe the majority of consumers have the right to know who produced the food that we are about to buy, and choose to buy American-made products when possible. I urge Montana legislators to pass this bill.

**A Montana Citizen's Endorsement of House Bill 406
The Country of Origin Placarding Act (COOL)
Jeff Brown
Nye, Montana**

I believe the above referenced bill is a much needed reform to the current labeling standards. Since the US Congress is unable to complete this effort, it should be incumbent on the Montana State legislatures to approve HB 406. There are numerous reasons why I support this bill:

- Allow Montanans the ability to choose and purchase food products made in America and even more so, made in Montana.
- Take a leadership position in America by showing support for the independent farmers and ranchers that are such a necessary and vital part of our economy.
- Help offset the impact of the potential reduction in federal farm subsidies that could drive these independent farmers and ranchers out of business.

I look forward to our Montana legislature giving this bill it's unanimous approval.

Cody Ferguson

From: Elaine Clark [2cpaints@nemontel.net]
Sent: Tuesday, February 15, 2005 8:27 AM
To: cody@northernplains.org
Subject: HB 406 COOL Act

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

HB 406 COOL Act

A concerned housewife Elaine Clark of Froid MT

I am in full support of the Country of Origin Labeling Act. I think the most important reason is for the SAFETY of our food supply. I feel that even if we "win the war on terror" it will never be completely over. There will always be extremists and we have no control over the chemicals or quality of our food supply beyond our borders.

Our government has felt it prudent to regulate our farmers and all the other businessmen in the "farm to market" chain of our food supply in order to give our citizens the best and safest food in the world. If QUALITY is so important then tell me why this act is should not have the full support of the Senate and House of Representatives.

I would love to have the OPPORTUNITY to support our own farmers and ranchers!

Thank you
Sincerely,
Elaine Clark