FAIR PACKAGING AND LABELING ACT

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[Currency: This publication is a compilation of the text of Public Law 89–755. It was last amended by the public law listed in the As Amended Through note above and below at the bottom of each page of the pdf version and reflects current law through the date of the enactment of the public law listed at https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/comps/]

[Note: While this publication does not represent an official version of any Federal statute, substantial efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of its contents. The official version of Federal law is found in the United States Statutes at Large and in the United States Code. The legal effect to be given to the Statutes at Large and the United States Code is established by statute (1 U.S.C. 112, 204).]

AN ACT To regulate interstate and foreign commerce by preventing the use of unfair or deceptive methods of packaging or labeling of certain consumer commodities distributed in such commerce, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, [15 U.S.C. 1451 note] That this Act may be cited as the "Fair Packaging and Labeling Act".

DECLARATION OF POLICY

SEC. 2. [15 U.S.C. 1451] Informed consumers are essential to the fair and efficient functioning of a free market economy. Packages and their labels should enable consumers to obtain accurate information as to the quantity of the contents and should facilitate value comparisons. Therefore, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to assist consumers and manufacturers in reaching these goals in the marketing of consumer goods.

PROHIBITION OF UNFAIR AND DECEPTIVE PACKAGING AND LABELING

SEC. 3. [15 U.S.C. 1452] (a) It shall be unlawful for any person engaged in the packaging or labeling of any consumer commodity (as defined in this Act) for distribution in commerce, or for any person (other than a common carrier for hire, a contract carrier for hire, or a freight forwarder for hire) engaged in the distribution in commerce of any packaged or labeled consumer commodity, to distribute or to cause to be distributed in commerce any such commodity if such commodity is contained in a package, or if there is affixed to that commodity a label, which does not conform to the provisions of this Act and of regulations promulgated under the authority of this Act.

(b) The prohibition contained in subsection (a) shall not apply to persons engaged in business as wholesale or retail distributors

of consumer commodities except to the extent that such persons (1) are engaged in the packaging or labeling of such commodities, or (2) prescribe or specify by any means the manner in which such commodities are packaged or labeled.

REQUIREMENTS AND PROHIBITIONS

SEC. 4. [15 U.S.C. 1453] (a) No person subject to the prohibition contained in section 3 shall distribute or cause to be distributed in commerce any packaged consumer commodity unless in conformity with regulations which shall be established by the promulgating authority pursuant to section 6 of this Act which shall provide that—

(1)[1] The commodity shall bear a label specifying the identity of the commodity and the name and place of business of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor;

(2) The net quantity of contents (in terms of weight or mass, measure, or numerical count) shall be separately and accurately stated in a uniform location upon the principal display panel of that label, using the most appropriate units of both the customary inch/pound system of measure, as provided in paragraph (3) of this subsection, and, except as provided in paragraph (3)(A)(ii) or paragraph (6) of this subsection, the SI metric system;

(3) The separate label statement of net quantity of contents appearing upon or affixed to any package—

(A)(i) if on a package labeled in terms of weight, shall be expressed in pounds, with any remainder in terms of ounces or common or decimal fractions of the pound; or in the case of liquid measure, in the largest whole unit (quarts, quarts and pints, or pints, as appropriate) with any remainder in terms of fluid ounces or common or decimal fractions of the pint or quart;

(ii) if on a random package, may be expressed in terms of pounds and decimal fractions of the pound carried out to not more than three decimal places and is not required to, but may, include a statement in terms of the SI metric system carried out to not more than three decimal places;

(iii) if on a package labeled in terms of linear measure, shall be expressed in terms of the largest whole unit (yards, yards and feet, or feet, as appropriate) with any remainder in terms of inches or common or decimal fractions of the foot or yard;

(iv) if on a package labeled in terms of measure of area, shall be expressed in terms of the largest whole square unit (square yards, square yards and square feet, or square feet, as appropriate) with any remainder in terms of square inches or common or decimal fractions of the square foot or square yard;

(B) shall appear in conspicuous and easily legible type in distinct contrast (by typography, layout, color, embossing, or molding) with other matter on the package;

(C) shall contain letters or numerals in a type size which shall be (i) established in relationship to the area of the prin-

[1] Indentation of paragraphs (1) through (6) so in law.

cipal display panel of the package, and (ii) uniform for all packages of substantially the same size; and

(D) shall be so placed that the lines of printed matter included in that statement are generally parallel to the base on which the package rests as it is designed to be displayed; and

(4) The label of any package of a consumer commodity which bears a representation as to the number of servings of such commodity contained in such package shall bear a statement of the net quantity (in terms of weight or mass, measure, or numerical count) of each such serving.

(5) For purposes of paragraph (3)(A)(ii) of this subsection the term "random package" means a package which is one of a lot, shipment, or delivery of packages of the same consumer commodity with varying weights or masses, that is, packages with no fixed weight or mass pattern.

(6) The requirement of paragraph (2) that the statement of net quantity of contents include a statement in terms of the SI metric system shall not apply to foods that are packaged at the retail store level.

(b) No person subject to the prohibition contained in section 3 shall distribute or cause to be distributed in commerce any packaged consumer commodity if any qualifying words or phrases appear in conjunction with the separate statement of the net quantity of contents required by subsection (a), but nothing in this subsection or in paragraph (2) of subsection (a) shall prohibit supplemental statements, at other places on the package, describing in nondeceptive terms the net quantity of contents: *Provided,* That such supplemental statements of net quantity of contents shall not include any term qualifying a unit of weight or mass, measure, or count that tends to exaggerate the amount of the commodity contained in the package.

ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS

SEC. 5. [15 U.S.C. 1454] (a) The authority to promulgate regulations under this Act is vested in (A) the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare (referred to hereinafter as the "Secretary") with respect to any consumer commodity which is a food, drug, device, or cosmetic, as each such term is defined by section 201 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 321); and (B) the Federal Trade Commission (referred to hereinafter as the "Commission") with respect to any other consumer commodity.

(b) If the promulgating authority specified in this section finds that, because of the nature, form, or quantity of a particular consumer commodity, or for other good and sufficient reasons, full compliance with all the requirements otherwise applicable under section 4 of this act is impracticable or is not necessary for the adequate protection of consumers, the Secretary or the Commission (whichever the case may be) shall promulgate regulations exempting such commodity from those requirements to the extent and under such conditions as the promulgating authority determines to be consistent with section 2 of this Act.

(c) Whenever the promulgating authority determines that regulations containing prohibitions or requirements other than those

prescribed by section 4 are necessary to prevent the deception of consumers or to facilitate value comparisons as to any consumer commodity, such authority shall promulgate with respect to that commodity regulations effective to—

(1) establish and define standards for characterization of the size of a package enclosing any consumer commodity, which may be used to supplement the label statement of net quantity of contents of packages containing such commodity, but this paragraph shall not be construed as authorizing any limitation on the size, shape, weight or mass, dimensions, or number of packages which may be used to enclose any commodity;

(2) regulate the placement upon any package containing any commodity, or upon any label affixed to such commodity, of any printed matter stating or representing by implication that such commodity is offered for retail sale at a price lower than the ordinary and customary retail sale price or that a retail sale price advantage is accorded to purchasers thereof by reason of the size of that package or the quantity of its contents;

(3) require that the label on each package of a consumer commodity (other than one which is a food within the meaning of section 201(f) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act) bear (A) the common or usual name of such consumer commodity, if any, and (B) in case such consumer commodity consists of two or more ingredients, the common or usual name of each such ingredient listed in order of decreasing predominance, but nothing in this paragraph shall be deemed to require that any trade secret be divulged; or

(4) prevent the nonfunctional-slack-fill of packages containing consumer commodities.

For purposes of paragraph (4) of this subsection, a package shall be deemed to be nonfunctionally slack-filled if it is filled to substantially less than its capacity for reasons other than (A) protection of the contents of such package or (B) the requirements of machines used for enclosing the contents in such package.

(d) Whenever the Secretary of Commerce determines that there is undue proliferation of the weights or masses, measures, or quantities in which any consumer commodity or reasonably comparable consumer commodities are being distributed in packages for sale at retail and such undue proliferation impairs the reasonable ability of consumers to make value comparisons with respect to such consumer commodity or commodities, he shall request manufacturers, packers, and distributors of the commodity or commodities to participate in the development of a voluntary product standard for such commodity or commodities under the procedures for the development of voluntary products standards established by the Secretary pursuant to section 2 of the Act of March 3, 1901 (31 Stat. 1449, as amended; 15 U.S.C. 272). Such procedures shall provide adequate manufacturer, packer, distributor, and consumer representation.

(e) If (1) after one year after the date on which the Secretary of Commerce first makes the request of manufacturers, packers, and distributors to participate in the development of a voluntary

product standard as provided in subsection (d) of this section, he determines that such a standard will not be published pursuant to the provisions of such subsection (d), or (2) if[1] such a standard is published and the Secretary of Commerce determines that it has not been observed, he shall promptly report such determination to the Congress with a statement of the efforts that have been made under the voluntary standards program and his recommendation as to whether Congress should enact legislation providing regulatory authority to deal with the situation in question.

PROCEDURE FOR PROMULGATION OF REGULATIONS

SEC. 6. [15 U.S.C. 1455] (a) Regulations promulgated by the Secretary under section 4 or section 5 of this Act shall be promulgated, and shall be subject to judicial review, pursuant to the provisions of subsections (e), (f), and (g) of section 701 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 371 (e), (f), and (g)). Hearings authorized or required for the promulgation of any such regulations by the Secretary shall be conducted by the Secretary or by such officer or employee of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare as he may designate for that purpose.

(b) Regulations promulgated by the Commission under section 4 or section 5 of this Act shall be promulgated, and shall be subject to judicial review, by proceedings taken in conformity with the provisions of subsections (e), (f), and (g) of section 701 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 371 (e), (f), and (g)) in the same manner, and with the same effect, as if such proceedings were taken by the Secretary pursuant to subsection (a) of this section. Hearings authorized or required for the promulgation of any such regulations by the Commission shall be conducted by the Commission or by such officer or employee of the Commission as the Commission may designate for that purpose.

(c) In carrying into effect the provisions of this Act, the Secretary and the Commission are authorized to cooperate with any department or agency of the United States, with any State, Commonwealth, or possession of the United States, and with any department, agency, or political subdivision of any such State, Commonwealth, or possession.

(d) No regulation adopted under this Act shall preclude the continued use of returnable or reusable glass containers for beverages in inventory or with the trade as of the effective date of this Act, nor shall any regulation under this Act preclude the orderly disposal of packages in inventory or with the trade as of the effective date of such regulation.

ENFORCEMENT

SEC. 7. [15 U.S.C. 1456] (a) Any consumer commodity which is a food, drug, device, or cosmetic, as each such term is defined by section 201 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 321), and which is introduced or delivered for introduction into commerce in violation of any of the provisions of this Act, or the regulations issued pursuant to this Act, shall be deemed to be

[1] Repetition so in law. The word "if" in clause (2) of subsection (e) probably should be stricken.

misbranded within the meaning of chapter III of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, but the provisions of section 303 of that Act (21 U.S.C. 333) shall have no application to any violation of section 3 of this Act.

(b) Any violation of any of the provisions of this Act, or the regulations issued pursuant to this Act, with respect to any consumer commodity which is not a food, drug, device, or cosmetic, shall constitute an unfair or deceptive act or practice in commerce in violation of section 5(a) of the Federal Trade Commission Act and shall be subject to enforcement under section 5(b) of the Federal Trade Commission Act.

(c) In the case of any imports into the United States of any consumer commodity covered by this Act, the provisions of sections 4 and 5 of this Act shall be enforced by the Secretary of the Treasury pursuant to section 801 (a) and (b) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 381).

[annual reports to congress] [1]

SEC. 8. [15 U.S.C. 1457] Each officer or agency required or authorized by this Act to promulgate regulations for the packaging or labeling of any consumer commodity, shall transmit to the Congress each year a report containing a full and complete description of the activities of that officer or agency for the administration and enforcement of this Act during the preceding fiscal year. All agencies except the Department of Health and Human Services and the Federal Trade Commission shall submit their reports in January of each year. The Department of Health and Human Services shall include this report in its annual report to Congress on activities under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, and the Federal Trade Commission shall include this report in the Commission's annual report to Congress.

COOPERATION WITH STATE AUTHORITIES

SEC. 9. [15 U.S.C. 1458] (a) A copy of each regulation promulgated under this Act shall be transmitted promptly to the Secretary of Commerce, who shall (1) transmit copies thereof to all appropriate State officers and agencies, and (2) furnish to such State officers and agencies information and assistance to promote to the greatest practicable extent uniformity in State and Federal regulation of the labeling of consumer commodities.

(b) Nothing contained in this section shall be construed to impair or otherwise interfere with any program carried into effect by the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare under other provisions of law in cooperation with State governments or agencies, instrumentalities, or political subdivisions thereof.

DEFINITIONS

SEC. 10. [15 U.S.C. 1459] For the purposes of this Act—

(a) [2] The term "consumer commodity", except as otherwise specifically provided by this subsection, means any food, drug, device,

[1] Editorially supplied. Section 8 heading omitted in law.

[2] Designation so in law. Subsections (a) through (f) probably should have been paragraphs (1) through (6).

or cosmetic (as those terms are defined by the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act), and any other article, product, or commodity of any kind or class which is customarily produced or distributed for sale through retail sales agencies or instrumentalities for consumption by individuals, or use by individuals for purposes of personal care or in the performance of services ordinarily rendered within the household, and which usually is consumed or expended in the course of such consumption or use. Such term does not include—

(1) any meat or meat product, poultry or poultry product, or tobacco or tobacco product;

(2) any commodity subject to packaging or labeling requirements imposed by the Secretary of Agriculture pursuant to the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, or the provisions of the eighth paragraph under the heading "Bureau of Animal Industry" of the Act of March 4, 1913 (37 Stat. 832–833; 21 U.S.C. 151–157), commonly known as the Virus-Serum-Toxin Act;

(3) any drug subject to the provisions of section 503(b)(1) or 506 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 353(b)(1) and 356);

(4) any beverage subject to or complying with packaging or labeling requirements imposed under the Federal Alcohol Administration Act (27 U.S.C. 201 et seq.); or

(5) any commodity subject to the provisions of the Federal Seed Act (7 U.S.C. 1551–1610).

(b) The term "package" means any container or wrapping in which any consumer commodity is enclosed for use in the delivery or display of that consumer commodity to retail purchasers, but does not include—

(1) shipping containers or wrappings used solely for the transportation of any consumer commodity in bulk or in quantity to manufacturers, packers, or processors, or to wholesale or retail distributors thereof;

(2) shipping containers or outer wrappings used by retailers to ship or deliver any commodity to retail customers if such containers and wrappings bear no printed matter pertaining to any particular commodity; or

(3) containers subject to the provisions of the Act of August 3, 1912 (37 Stat. 250, as amended; 15 U.S.C. 231–233), or the Act of March 4, 1915 (38 Stat. 1186, as amended; 15 U.S.C. 234–236).

(c) The term "label" means any written, printed, or graphic matter affixed to any consumer commodity or affixed to or appearing upon a package containing any consumer commodity.

(d) The term "person" includes any firm, corporation, or association.

(e) The term "commerce" means (1) commerce between any State, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, or any territory or possession of the United States, and any place outside thereof, and (2) commerce within the District of Columbia or within any territory or possession of the United States not organized with a legislative body, but shall not include exports to foreign countries.

(f) The term "principal display panel" means that part of a label that is most likely to be displayed, presented, shown, or examined under normal and customary conditions of display for retail sale.

SAVING PROVISION

SEC. 11. [15 U.S.C. 1460] Nothing contained in this Act shall be construed to repeal, invalidate, or supersede—

(a)[1] the Federal Trade Commission Act or any statute defined therein as an antitrust Act;

(b) the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act; or

(c) the Federal Hazardous Substances Labeling Act.

EFFECT UPON STATE LAW

SEC. 12. [15 U.S.C. 1461] It is hereby declared that it is the express intent of Congress to supersede any and all laws of the States or political subdivisions thereof insofar as they may now or hereafter provide for the labeling of the net quantity of contents of the package of any consumer commodity covered by this Act which are less stringent than or require information different from the requirements of section 4 of this Act or regulations promulgated pursuant thereto.

EFFECTIVE DATE

SEC. 13. [15 U.S.C. 1451 note] This Act shall take effect on July 1, 1967: *Provided,* That the Secretary (with respect to any consumer commodity which is a food, drug, device, or cosmetic, as those terms are defined by the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act), and the Commission (with respect to any other consumer commodity) may by regulation postpone, for an additional twelve-month period, the effective date of this Act with respect to any class or type of consumer commodity on the basis of a finding that such a postponement would be in the public interest.

[1] Designation so in law. Subsections (a) through (c) probably should have been paragraphs (1) through (3).