



May 17, 2016

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman, House Education and Workforce
Committee
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Scott
Ranking Member, House Education and
Workforce Committee
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Scott:

On behalf of the nation's dairy farmers, cooperatives and processors, we wish to express our support for the dairy provisions of the Improving Child Nutrition and Education Act of 2016.

Milk and other healthy dairy foods have always been integral to child nutrition programs, from school lunches and breakfasts to WIC, CACFP and other programs that serve our youth and vulnerable, at-risk populations. Because almost all age groups consume less dairy than recommended by the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA), child nutrition programs offer the opportunity to improve dairy intake, especially among our nation's youth. As the expert advisory panel on the DGA stated, **"Consumption of dairy foods provides numerous health benefits, including lower risk of diabetes, metabolic syndrome, cardiovascular disease and obesity."** Along with dairy's long-established role in promoting bone health, reducing the risk of insidious chronic diseases and conditions demonstrates why milk is offered with every school meal and dairy foods are prominent parts of other nutrition assistance programs.

Unfortunately, fluid milk consumption in schools has declined in recent years. There is also some evidence that milk utilization in the WIC program has declined. In both cases, these declines exceed what would be expected from ongoing changes in the number of program participants. The consequences for nutrient adequacy, child health and other vital national priorities are troubling.

The bill to be considered by the Committee on Education and the Workforce addresses these concerns by directing the Department of Agriculture to review milk consumption in the school meal programs. The legislation lays out appropriate criteria for USDA's consideration, and requires adjustments as necessary to promote better consumption of milk by the nation's students and to permit schools to offer all varieties consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The bill also addresses innovative approaches to meeting the needs of lactose-intolerant children. Of great importance, the legislation will

continue current laws that make milk integral to all the child nutrition programs. The National Milk Producers Federation and International Dairy Foods Association are longtime supporters of child nutrition programs and strongly support the dairy specific provisions in the bill before the Committee.

Sincerely,



James Mulhern
President and CEO
National Milk Producers Federation



Connie Tipton
President and CEO
International Dairy Foods Association

The National Milk Producers Federation (www.nmpf.org), based in Arlington, VA, develops and carries out policies that advance the well-being of dairy producers and the cooperatives they own. The members of NMPF's cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of more than 32,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies.

The International Dairy Foods Association (www.idfa.org), Washington, D.C., represents the nation's dairy manufacturing and marketing industries and their suppliers, with a membership of 550 companies representing a \$125-billion a year industry. IDFA is composed of three constituent organizations: the Milk Industry Foundation (MIF), the National Cheese Institute (NCI) and the International Ice Cream Association (IICA). IDFA's 220 dairy processing members run more than 600 plant operations, and range from large multi-national organizations to single-plant companies. Together they represent more than 85% of the milk, cultured products, cheese and frozen desserts produced and marketed in the United States.