



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

## TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE February 26, 2007

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### Senate Bill 258 - An Act Prohibiting the Use of Trans Fat in Connecticut Food Service Establishments

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The Department of Public Health provides the following information with regard to Senate Bill 258.

Artificial trans fats—short for *trans fatty acids*—are partially hydrogenated vegetable oils; commonly used in the fast food, snack food, fried food and baked good industries. Although small amounts of trans fats occur naturally in the milk and body fat of cows and sheep, most trans fats consumed today are industrially created. Trans fats are popular with the food industry because they lengthen shelf life and improve taste.

Trans fats interfere with the body's ability to regulate cholesterol. They drive up the low-density lipoproteins, or LDL, the "bad" cholesterol, which markedly increases the risk of heart disease and stroke, and are also believed to increase the risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes. At the same time, trans fats lower high-density lipoproteins (HDL), or "good" cholesterol, which can lead to clogged arteries and cardiovascular disease.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health believes that limiting the use of trans fats in food service establishments is an important step toward removing a common source of trans fats and related harmful effects from the diet of Connecticut residents. However, it is also important to note that this legislation, as drafted, does not impact other frequent sources such as pre-packaged food items, margarines, pastries and common snack foods containing trans fats, nor does the current proposed bill require the removal of trans fats from food preparation in school cafeterias. The American Heart Association recommends that daily intake of trans fat be limited to 2-2.5 grams per day. Individuals interested in this legislation will greatly benefit by reviewing the 2006 report "Transforming the Food Supply" from the Canadian Trans Fats Task Force, which makes thorough recommendations regarding the limits for the trans fat contents of food, and the benefits of regulation and public education regarding this issue.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

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