

## **Cheese Lovers of the House Unite!**

**From: The Honorable Peter Welch**

**Date: 6/11/2014**

### **Stop the FDA from Banning Centuries-old Cheese Making Practice Support the Welch/Ribble/Kind/Ryan/Duffy/Defazio/ Pocan/Gibson/Pingree/Huffman/Hanna/Courtney/Owens/Kuster/Petri/Walberg/Weber Amendment**

Dear Colleague,

Since the time of Adam and Eve, cheese makers have aged cheese on wood boards and wood shelves. Wood allows the cheese to breathe and develop its tangy and rich flavor during the aging process. In Europe, cheese makers are required to use wood shelves to age the product to develop the proper texture and flavor.

Astonishingly, the Food and Drug Administration has begun a “crackdown” on America’s small artisan cheese makers for using wood shelves in the aging process. Without evidence to support its enforcement, the agency has cited the risk of contamination as the cause for its overreach.

According to the FDA, *“The use of wooden shelves for cheese ripening does not conform to current Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) regulations, which require that ‘all plant equipment and utensils shall be so designed and of such material and workmanship as to be adequately cleanable, and shall be properly maintained.’”*

This bureaucratic overreach by the FDA is a solution in search of a problem. Artisan cheese makers already have rigorous protocols in place to assure the safety of their product. Instead of banning a centuries-old aging process and triggering a possible trade war with Europe, the FDA should take a deep breath and work collaboratively with food scientists and cheese makers to ensure their products meet the high standards expected by cheese loving consumers around the world.

The burgeoning artisan cheese industry is made up of small business entrepreneurs dedicated to producing world-class American cheeses and creating the good jobs that go with it. Please support our amendment to stop the FDA in its tracks from doing serious harm to these small businesses.

Sincerely,

PETER WELCH  
RON KIND  
PETER DEFAZIO  
MARK POCAN  
CHELLIE PINGREE  
JOE COURTNEY  
BILL OWENS  
ANNE MCLANE KUSTER  
JARED HUFFMAN

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