

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 12, 2020

Secretary Sonny Perdue
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1280 Maryland Ave SW
Washington, D.C.

Secretary Alex Azar
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
330 C St SW Washington, D.C.

Dear Secretaries Perdue and Azar,

We are writing with concern regarding the 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC) process and the Committee's recommendation to dramatically alter long-standing U.S. dietary guidelines on moderate alcohol consumption, without consideration for the preponderance of scientific evidence. We request information from your Agencies about how this conclusion was reached, considering the lack of scientific evidence to justify any change in current moderate drinking recommendations.

We appreciate that your Agencies said from the beginning of the 2020 Dietary Guidelines process that it would be based on the most rigorous standards for transparency and science. Therefore, we are troubled that on June 17 the Committee presented a brand-new recommendation that would halve the recommended maximum alcohol intake guideline for men, reducing it to just one drink per day. The recommendation was then carried through to the DGAC final scientific report which was publicly released on July 15.

This recommendation runs directly contrary to the DGAC's charter requiring that recommendations are based on the "preponderance" of current science. The Committee's published Nutrition Evidence Systematic Review (NESR) protocol included sixty research studies on the relationship between alcohol and all-cause mortality, the vast majority of which the Committee itself says show benefits of moderate drinking on longevity or show no negative relationship between moderate drinking and longevity. No NESR systematic reviews were conducted for cancer and cardiovascular disease.

Further, we are concerned that limited evidence outside the scope of the systematic review was used to derive at the recommended change to the daily drinking guideline for men, which is a violation of the DGAC charter. Specifically, the scientific report states that most studies in the systematic review found lower risk for men who consume up to 2 drinks per day when compared to men consuming higher amounts. Then, the report says "precise estimates" used to support the new recommendation for men were "taken from external meta-analyses and modeling studies outside of the NESR systematic review." Finally, the Committee concedes in the report that "only 1 study examined differences among men comparing 1 vs. 2 drinks."

We request that your Agencies swiftly review the process and inform us of the evidence base used by the Committee to justify this departure from long-standing U.S. guidelines regarding moderate alcohol consumption. We also ask that you ensure any published recommendations are consistent with the requirements for transparency and scientific rigor that govern the Dietary Guidelines for Americans development process.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

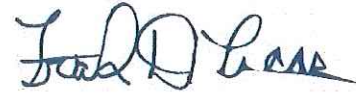
Sincerely,



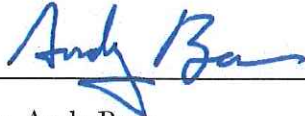
Rep. Andy Harris, M.D.



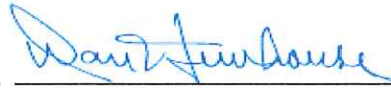
Rep. Ted S. Yoho



Rep. Frank Lucas



Rep. Andy Barr



Rep. Dan Newhouse



Rep. John Yarmuth



Rep. Greg Gianforte



Rep. Scott Tipton



Rep. Devin Nunes



Rep. Mike Gallagher



Rep. Mike Thompson



Rep. Scott Perry



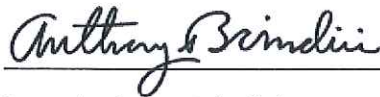
Rep. Tom Cole




Rep. William Timmons



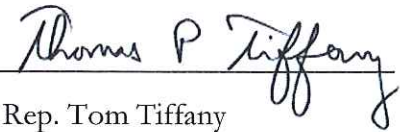
Rep. Doug LaMalfa



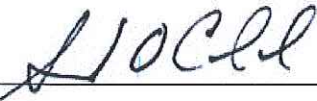
Rep. Anthony Brindisi



Rep. Scott DesJarlais



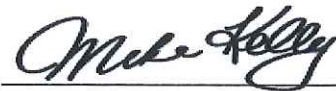
Rep. Tom Tiffany



Rep. Salud O. Carbajal



Rep. Jared Huffman



Rep. Mike Kelly



Rep. James Comer



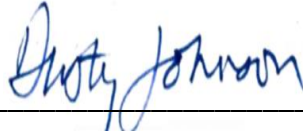
Rep. J. Luis Correa



Rep. Jim Costa



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