



Opposition to SNAP Purchase Restrictions in Sub HB 96
Senate Health Committee
May 13, 2025

Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Liston, and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Kimberly McConville, Executive Director of the Ohio Beverage Association. I am here on behalf of Ohio's non-alcoholic beverage industry which **contributes \$14 billion to Ohio's economy and employs over 12,000 Ohioans**. We are also part of the 15-member business coalition that strongly opposes SNAP purchase restriction language included in Sub HB 96. Members include:

Ohio Bakers Association
Ohio Beverage Association
Ohio Business Roundtable
Can Manufacturers Institute
Ohio Chamber of Commerce
Ohio Council of Retail Merchants
Ohio Dairy Producers Association
The Ohio Energy & Convenience Association
The Food Industry Association
Ohio Grocers Association
Ohio Manufacturers Association
Ohio Association of Wholesaler-Distributors
Ohio Wholesale Marketers Association
National Confectioners Association
SNAC International

This language was placed in Sub HB 96 without any public input or debate. **We believe it will not make Ohioans healthier or save taxpayer money.** We see restrictions not as reform, but as ignoring market based efforts to improve health, growing government regulations and undermining work to make Ohio a great place to invest and grow a business.

Free Market Innovation Drives Beverage Industry

We are a consumer facing industry that has responded to our customers' concerns. We have reformulated products, increased options, and **empowered families to make informed choices**. This work is intentional, and we have transformed the beverage aisle.

- Over **60% of beverages sold today contain zero sugar**. And we offer zero calorie versions of flagship products.

-Smaller portion options, like mini cans, **support moderation**.

- Every bottle, can, and pack includes **clear calorie labeling** on the front, so shoppers can make decisions that work for their families.

- With more choices and less sugar options, sweetened **beverages make up less than 6% of the average person's daily caloric intake**—a small fraction of the diet.

Obesity Claim Doesn't Match the Data

Despite sound bites to the contrary, soda is not driving obesity. In fact, while adult obesity is up 37% since 2000, full-calorie soda sales are down 23%.

If soda were the primary driver of obesity, we'd see a drop in obesity rates alongside falling beverage calories. We didn't. That tells us this issue is broader—and more complex—than one category of products.

Restrictions Don't Improve Health—They Grow Government

This proposal doesn't solve public health challenges. Instead, it will:

- Create an Ohio specific carve-out in a federal program which will contribute to a **patchwork of state by state laws**. Our retail colleagues have more information on these challenges.

- Require **new layers of enforcement** and eligibility determinations for thousands of products already in the marketplace and new ones entering the trade.

-Increase pressure to restrict more grocery items—it begins with soda but could travel down the path of **pushing vegetarian or dairy-free diets** by excluding more products.

If the goal is to support families in making healthy choices, Ohio can continue to invest in Produce Perks which increase purchase power and **access to fresh fruits and vegetables** or SNAP-Ed which **teaches families how to use these ingredients** to cook healthy meals on a budget. These programs focus on education not restrictions to build better habits.

Regulations Undermine Ohio's Business Climate

Ohio is a great place to do business, and our industry is proud to support that. We applaud your work to **cut government red tape** and unleash Ohio's economic potential.

But proposals like this one tell employers that Ohio is willing to complicate commerce and politicize product access—two things that make it harder to invest, hire, and grow.

Instead, we want to celebrate more events like the **new \$100 million Coca-Cola Consolidated facility** ribbon-cutting in Columbus. We want to commemorate more milestones like **G&J Pepsi's 100th anniversary** later this month.

The 12,000 jobs we have in Ohio with family-supporting wages, strong benefits and room to advance, offer stability. And **that stability is part of building healthier communities**.

The Path Forward

Our industry stands ready to continue innovating, expanding zero-sugar options, and providing transparency and choice. But we oppose policies that restrict personal freedom, grow bureaucracy, and hurt the businesses that power our state.

We join over a dozen of our business association colleagues in respectfully asking for removal of SNAP purchase restriction language in Sub HB 96.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome your questions.