GLOBAL COLD CHAIN ALLIANCE®

GCCA Overview

H.R. 4987 Food Date Labeling Act H.R. 5840 Feed the Community Act

Summary

GCCA is committed to reducing food waste by supporting science-based and practical policies to reduce confusion over date labeling and encourage food and equipment donations through tax incentives. GCCA supports H.R. 4987 Food Date Labeling Act and H.R. 5840 Feed the Community Act to streamline food waste reduction efforts in the U.S.

Food Date Labeling Background

In the United States, food date labels are generally not federally mandated safety deadlines but are used to indicate optimum quality rather than safety, with a few exceptions like infant formula. Common date labels include Sell-By, Best If Used By, Best Before, Use-By, Fresh Until Use or Freeze By, Enjoy By, and Expires On. Most often, these date labels reflect quality, not safety, unless specified otherwise. Variations in label wording and meaning cause consumer confusion and lead to dumping food that is still safe and nutritious.

Confusion over the variety of date labels used cause billions of pounds of safe food to be thrown away each year, and cold chain operators are often required to discard it. Standardizing food date labels would reduce waste by clearly communicating what each date means, eliminating confusion, and preventing the premature discard of safe, high-quality food. The combat this issue, Congress has proposed the Food Date Labeling Act of 2025 which aims to standardize how quality and discard dates are displayed on food labels across the United States.

Tax Deduction Background

Food banks and food pantries across America are experiencing increased demand for service, and they need greater capacity to help communities put food on the table. A challenge food banks have raised is the need for equipment to store more food, and trucks to transport it to service areas. This is a cost burden for them. The current tax code only allows for charitable donations for food inventory, defined as “food intended for human consumption that meets all quality and labeling standards imposed by federal, state, and local laws and regulations even though the food may not be readily marketable due to appearance, age, freshness, grade, size, surplus, or other conditions.”

Food banks provide a critical role in the redistribution of safe, edible food, working with GCCA members to handle large donations. These food banks often operate sizeable warehouses, which require equipment. Currently, these donations are not considered tax-exempt. In response, Congress introduced the Feed the Community Act which would create tax deductions for businesses that donate food storage equipment and food transportation vehicles to non-profit organizations whose primary mission is to fight hunger in their communities.

Policy Recommendations

GCCA urges Congress to Pass H.R. 4987 Food Date Labeling Act and advance H.R. 5840 Feed the Community Act.