



November 5, 2025

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

RE: Inclusion of Food Safety and Nutrition Priorities in the FY2027 Executive Budget

Dear Governor Hochul:

New Yorkers are facing growing challenges in accessing safe, affordable, and healthy food. The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), a longstanding consumer advocacy organization advancing evidence-based food and public health policy, respectfully urges you to include a targeted package of low-cost, high-impact food safety and nutrition reforms in the FY2027 Executive Budget. These reforms will make foods served through the Universal School Meals Program safer, help protect New Yorkers from harmful ultra-processed foods, and ensure that industry bears the primary responsibility for food safety and transparency.

Together, these proposals strengthen preventive health strategies and create healthier food environments across schools, restaurants, grocery stores, and marketing platforms, so every New Yorker can more easily choose safe, nourishing options. They also represent a cost-effective investment at a time when federal oversight is falling short, positioning New York as a national leader in protecting public health and advancing equity.

We respectfully request the inclusion of the following reforms in the FY2027 Executive Budget:

Require companies to prove food chemicals are safe: *Food Safety and Chemical Disclosure Act – A1556/S1239*

This measure requires companies that introduce food chemicals through the federal “generally recognized as safe” (GRAS) loophole¹ and bypass FDA review to submit their safety evidence to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, which would make the information publicly available in an online database. The estimated \$250,000 needed to establish the database would be recouped through user fees, which would also cover the cost of new listings and maintenance, while the public health benefit—protecting New Yorkers from chemicals with unknown safety—is substantial. Separately, the bill bans three specific chemicals known to pose health risks, providing immediate safeguards for New Yorkers.

Prohibit unsafe chemicals in school meals: *A8707/S3214*

Synthetic dyes—currently prohibited from New York City school foods but allowed in schools outside the city—are linked to hyperactivity, inattentiveness, and other behavioral issues in some children.² Banning these dyes from school meals complements the Universal School Meals Program, helping ensure that every student receives safe, nutritious food that supports learning and development.

Warn consumers about excessive sodium and added sugars: *Sodium Warning Bill – A5207/S428; Sweet Truth Act – A5305/S427*

These evidence based, low-cost reforms empower families to make informed choices at chain restaurants by providing clear labeling for menu items that are high in sodium or added sugar—without the need for significant new state expenditures.

Prevent predatory marketing to children and vulnerable populations:

Predatory Marketing Prevention Act – A2584/S397

This legislation expands the definition of false or misleading advertising by directing courts to explicitly consider whether the advertisement is a food advertisement targeting children, older adults, and other vulnerable consumers. In doing so, it takes an important step toward addressing pervasive, inequitable marketing practices that fuel diet-related diseases and disproportionately harm Black, Latino, and low-income communities.³

In an era of declining federal investment and fiscal uncertainty, New York has an opportunity to lead by implementing smart, low-cost solutions that strengthen the food system, hold industry accountable, and support healthier communities. Together, these reforms reinforce the state’s long-term commitment to public health and equity.

With support from a broad and diverse coalition of New York organizations representing public health, consumer, environmental, and community interests, these reforms reflect a strong shared commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of all New Yorkers. We respectfully urge their inclusion in the FY2027 Executive Budget so that New York residents have access to safe, affordable, and healthy food.

Sincerely,

Center for Science in the Public Interest

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References

¹ U.S. Government Accountability Office. *Food Safety: FDA Should Strengthen Its Oversight of Food Ingredients Determined to Be Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS)*. 2010. <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-10-246>.

² California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA). *Health Effects Assessment: Potential Neurobehavioral Effects of Synthetic Food Dyes in Children*. 2021. <https://oehha.ca.gov/media/downloads/risk-assessment/report/healtheffectsassessment041621.pdf>.

³ Harris, J. L., Fleming-Milici, F., Phaneuf, L., Jensen, M., Choi, Y. Y., McCann, M., & Mancini, S. *Fast Food FACTS 2021: Fast food advertising: Billions in spending, continued high exposure to youth*. UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity. 2021. <https://media.ruddcenter.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2909/2024/06/FACTS2021.pdf>.