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EDWARD J. MARKEY
7th District, Massachusetts

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515—2107

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Mr. Paul Bulcke Chief Executive Officer (Designate) Nestlé SA Avenue Nestlé 55 CH-1800 Vevey, Vaud Switzerland

Dear Mr. Bulcke:

It has been over two and a half years since the Institute of Medicine released its report calling on companies to improve their balance of food marketing to children, one and a half years since the U.S. Council of Better Business Bureaus (CBBB) announced its Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (Initiative), nearly a year since a dozen major food and restaurant companies pledged to reduce their food advertising to children, over six months since I corresponded with Nestlé U.S.A. about the company's absence from the Initiative, and three months since Nestlé Canada joined a children's food marketing initiative in Canada. Today I, along with others across America, ask, what is taking Nestlé U.S.A. so long to address food marketing to children in the U.S.? I urge Nestlé U.S.A to join other major food companies and join the CBBB Initiative.

I was pleased to learn that Nestlé Canada has joined the Canadian CBBB's initiative. However, I am puzzled why Nestlé can pledge to cut back on junk-food marketing in Canada but not in the United States? Given the high rates of obesity in the U.S., American kids need the same protections as Canadian kids. The fact that one of the world's biggest food companies has not joined the U.S. self-regulatory initiative also raises the question of whether voluntary industry action will be sufficient to address food marketing to children and the serious childhood obesity crisis in this country.

According to Nestlé U.S.A. CEO Brad Alford's October 2007 letter to me, one reason that the company has not joined the initiative is because the company distributes an elementary school healthy lifestyles curriculum program, *Healthy Steps*. It is not clear that such a program would not be allowed under the CBBB Initiative. Nestlé could revise the curriculum so that none of the materials used directly by children would contain branding.

Nestlé U.S.A.'s absence from the CBBB Initiative has raised attention and consternation among American parents, health professionals, advocates, and policymakers. The company should act swiftly to show the American people that Nestlé cares as much about U.S. kids as it does about kids around the world. Nestlé U.S.A should adopt and implement strong nutrition standards and apply them to all of its food marketing to children.

Sincerely,

Representative Edward J. Markey U.S. House of Representatives