

**Alliance of Nurses for a Healthy Environment • Antibiotic Resistance Action Center, Milken Institute School of Public Health, George Washington University • CALPIRG • Center for Food Safety • Center for Foodborne Illness Research & Prevention • Center for Science in the Public Interest • Clean Water Action • Environmental Working Group • Food & Water Watch • Food Chain Workers Alliance • Health Care Without Harm • Healthy Food in Health Care • Keep Antibiotics Working • Natural Resources Defense Council • Physicians for Social Responsibility, San Francisco Bay Area Chapter • Prevention Institute • Roots of Change • San Francisco Marin Medical Society • Distinguished individuals**

June 29, 2017

Board of Supervisors  
City and County of San Francisco  
[Board.of.Supervisors@sfgov.org](mailto:Board.of.Supervisors@sfgov.org)

**Re: Support for San Francisco Ordinance on Reporting of Antibiotic Use Policies Associated with Meat and Poultry (File No. 170763)**

Dear Supervisors:

We, the undersigned, urge your support for San Francisco proposed legislation that would require large grocery chains in San Francisco to report to the City the antibiotic use policies associated with their fresh meat and poultry. The City could then analyze the information and share it with residents to inform their shopping decisions. While the chicken industry is changing rapidly in response to growing consumer demand for better practices, many producers and industry sectors (such as the pork and beef sectors) lag behind. Information on antibiotic use practices is lacking, except from a few companies that have restricted or eliminated their use of antibiotics. The proposed legislation would continue San Francisco's proud history of being at the vanguard of efforts to support consumers' right to information and to protect public health and the environment.

Prominent authorities like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) warn that antibiotic resistance is a public health crisis, leading to growing numbers of infections that can be difficult to treat, require longer and more expensive hospital stays, and are more likely to be fatal. While overuse of antibiotics in the healthcare sector is a factor in the rising rates of antibiotic resistance, the livestock

sector also plays a role—because 70% of all antibiotics that are important for human medicine (medically important antibiotics) sold in the United States are sold for use in poultry and livestock. Much of that use is on animals that are not sick.

Major scientific and health organizations like the CDC, World Health Organization (WHO), and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) agree that inappropriate use of antibiotics in livestock endangers public health through the spread of antibiotic resistant bacteria from farms to the community, including on meat. The WHO, the AAP, and the European Medicines Agency/European Food Safety Authority recommend that antibiotics should only be used to control or treat bacterial infections.

The federal government’s approach has a big loophole. The Food and Drug Administration has prohibited some uses of medically important antibiotics on animals that are not sick (to speed up animal growth), but continues to allow similar routine use of these drugs on healthy animals for other purposes (preventing disease in often unsanitary, stressful, and crowded conditions), facilitating continued overuse. California has stepped up by prohibiting all routine use of antibiotics in-state when animals are not sick (including for disease prevention) and by requiring monitoring of livestock antibiotics. But, the new law does not apply to out-of-state producers whose products are sold in San Francisco.

San Francisco’s proposed legislation fills the gap by requiring grocers to report to the City the antibiotic use practices associated with each line of poultry or meat product sold in their stores. This would supplement the State’s new law by providing San Franciscans information about meat and poultry produced outside California. The legislation is an important step forward for public health and environmental protections and consumers’ right-to-know, and we urge your support.

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