



AB 535 – California Olive Oil Labeling

SUMMARY

AB 535 establishes clear guidelines for when the California olive oil industry can use the term “*California*” in its product labeling and marketing. This will ensure that the labeling of olive oil does not mislead consumers regarding where the olives or the olive oil was sourced from.

BACKGROUND

California has had a thriving olive oil industry since the mid-19th century. Today, the state produces approximately 4% of the world’s olive oil from over 75 varieties of olives. Due to California’s well-established reputation for producing high-quality olive oils, the demand for California olive oil is steadily increasing.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) requires California Olive Oil to meet strict quality standards. For example, oils produced in the state must undergo a mandatory testing and sampling program administered by the department. These standards exist to ensure consumer confidence in California olive oils.

Existing law prohibits the labeling of olive oil as “California Olive Oil” unless 100% of the oil is derived from olives grown in the state. However, disagreements over the application of the law have resulted in product labeling that is confusing for consumers.

PROBLEM

Because of the high demand for olive oil produced with California olives, there has been an increase in branding of olive oil with the term “California” or with a California

regional designation when the product on shelves actually involves blending oils sourced from other regions of the world, including Spain, North Africa, and Argentina.

As a result, a bottle of olive oil may be advertised and branded as “California” or branded with a specific California region, but the fine print indicates that the oil comes from multiple countries. This has led to consumer confusion, and places California olive farmers and oil producers at a competitive disadvantage.

THIS BILL

AB 535 establishes clear guidelines for olive oil producers as to when they can use the term “California” in their labeling, and when they cannot. This bill strengthens existing law by making it illegal to make any false representation that an olive oil is produced entirely from olives grown within California unless that is true. Similarly, the bill applies a prohibition on false representations that an olive oil was produced from olives grown in a specific region of California, unless at least 85% of the olive oil was produced from olives grown in that region.

By establishing stronger guidelines for olive oil producers to follow in their labeling, AB 535 provides consumers with clear information about what they are purchasing. AB 535 standards also protect California olive growers and olive oil manufacturers from being undercut in the market by oils that benefit from using the “California” name. This bill strengthens the integrity of the already world renowned California olive oil brand.



Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar- Curry, 4th Assembly District

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SUPPORT

Agricultural Advisors
Alta California Olive Partners, LLC
Alves and Minton Farms
Big W Farms
Big W Ranch
Boundary Bend Olives
Bruce and Kathy Peacock Farm
Cal Ag Properties
California State Beekeepers Association
Catlett Olive Oil Company
Community Alliance With Family Farmers
Nor Cal Custom Ag Services
Olive Growers Council of California
Olive Oil Commission of California
Ribeiro Farms
Tarke Farms
Yocha DeHe of the Wintun Nation

CF Group
Chastain Farms
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Columbia Farms
Dailey Farms
Family Winemakers of California
Grimmy Farms
LDR Farms, LLC
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CONTACT

Brooke Pritchard | Assembly Fellow
(916) 319-2004 (O)
Brooke.Pritchard@asm.ca.gov