April 28, 2026

The Honorable Derek Schmidt
1223 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Schmidt:

As representatives of food and ingredient manufacturers and suppliers, we write to share our support for your Amendment # 204 to H.R. 7567, the Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026, which would direct the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to coordinate activities to enhance the capacity of domestic producers to increase production of crops used in naturally derived food and beverage colorants.

The U.S. food industry is currently managing a complex, system-wide shift in how color ingredients are sourced, produced, and incorporated into finished products. This transition is being driven by evolving regulatory frameworks and supply chain realities that will require alignment across agricultural production, ingredient processing, manufacturing systems, and distribution and retail channels. Coordinated federal engagement between USDA and HHS is essential to ensure that these interconnected elements develop in a practical, efficient, and economically viable manner.

Enhancing the capacity of domestic producers to increase production of colorant crops presents a meaningful opportunity for U.S. agriculture, but doing so at scale will require deliberate planning, sustained research, and targeted investment. Key considerations include agronomic suitability across regions, identification of crops most effective for reliable colorant production, crop genetics, and the need to address barriers to scale such as pest and disease pressures, harvesting technology, and other production challenges. In addition, investment in processing and extraction infrastructure — such as juicing and extraction facilities — and the development of stable, predictable markets for growers will be essential. In the absence of coordinated efforts, these factors may limit the pace, efficiency, and affordability with which domestic production capacity can be developed.

At the same time, the current supply chain for many naturally derived colorant inputs is global in nature. U.S. manufacturers rely on established international sourcing channels, which introduces exposure to trade dynamics, regional production variability, and logistical constraints. Federal coordination that considers both domestic production capacity and global sourcing dependencies can help support continuity of supply as domestic capabilities are developed over time.

From a manufacturing perspective, incorporating naturally derived colorants involves significant operational considerations. These ingredients often require different handling, processing conditions, and quality control approaches than traditional alternatives, and their successful integration may necessitate capital investments, process modifications, and updated supply chain management practices. Coordinated research, development, and demonstration of

methods and technologies, along with information sharing across stakeholders, will be important to support efficient implementation while maintaining product consistency and regulatory compliance.

Your amendment appropriately recognizes that this is not a single-agency issue. By establishing a framework for interagency coordination, competitive and merit-reviewed research, and collaboration across federal agencies, institutions of higher education, nonprofit organizations, and industry partners, the amendment creates a strong foundation for advancing this work. Support for research infrastructure, workforce development, and public-private collaboration will be critical to translating research into scalable, real-world outcomes and sustaining progress over time.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue and for your attention to the operational and economic considerations facing both U.S. agriculture and food manufacturers. We stand ready to serve as a resource as this effort moves forward and strongly encourage the House of Representatives to adopt your amendment.

Sincerely,

National Confectioners Association

Consumer Brands Association

International Dairy Foods Association

Independent Bakers Association

SNAC International

American Bakers Association

National Seasoning Manufacturers Association