

Newsom Signs Assembly Bill 535

Assembly Bill 535 was signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom last week. The bill, introduced by Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, establishes guidelines for how companies can use the word “California” on olive oil labels and other marketing materials.

While the OOC does not have authority to lobby and did not take a position on this bill, the new ruling is critically important to the goals of our organization: ensuring California olive oil is accurately labeled so that customers can have confidence in the quality of California olive oil and all California olive oil is trusted and valued.

The bill was supported by a group of California olive oil producers who launched a *Truth in Labeling* informational campaign.

According to a press release from Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry, consumers associate California produced olive oils with quality and demand has steadily increased over time. This increase in demand has led to companies using the word “California” on labels, even if the product only contains a small percentage of oil from olives actually produced in the state.

Aguiar-Curry carried the bill because she believes misleading labeling causes confusion among consumers. It also places 100 percent California olive oil farmers and producers at a competitive disadvantage because of the greater regulatory burden and higher costs, and hurts the reputation of California olive oil as a trusted product.

The guideline for olive oil labeling that Assembly Bill 535 provides consumers with clear and transparent information about the oil they are purchasing. The bill will require companies to disclose the minimum percentage of California olive oil present in their product and in the same size as the word “California” on their product label, packaging and marketing materials.

The bill does not prohibit or restrict blending oils from different sources and destinations, it only requires the term “California” be used in a way that truthfully and clearly represents the actual amount of California-grown olives used in the product.

With this bill, supporters hope to strengthen the integrity of California olive oils as a premium and trusted product.