



October 18, 2021

Mr. Vivek Sankaran
Chief Executive Officer
Albertsons Companies, Inc.
250 Parkcenter Boulevard
Boise, ID 83706

Dear Mr. Sankaran:

The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) is asking food retailers and sugary beverage manufacturers to make healthy choices easier for customers and their families by keeping soda in the soda aisle, including removing sodas and other sugary drinks, like punches, lemonades, and sports drinks, from end caps, checkouts, and displays outside of the soda aisle.

During the past year and a half, we've seen how critical grocery stores and other food retailers are to the health and wellness of communities. However, food retailers and soda manufacturers undermine this vital role with the ubiquitous placement of sodas throughout grocery stores. The grocery store layout is not dictated by customer demand, but by contracts between retailers and manufacturers that mandate which products are offered and how they are displayed. Despite Americans' desire for a healthy grocery shopping experience, beverage companies pay retailers steep fees to place sugary drinks in prominent areas of the grocery store to drive impulse purchases.

In fact, CSPI's recent pilot study, *Soda on Display*, found sodas and sugary drinks in an average of 30 places in grocery stores in the Washington, DC area. Tempting customers with sugary drinks at every turn threatens public health – the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Heart Association, American Medical Association, American Diabetes Association, American Public Health Association, National Academy of Sciences, and World Health Organization all recommend avoiding or limiting sugar-sweetened beverages.

Customers repeatedly share that they want their grocery stores to keep soda in the soda aisle. CSPI conducted a national poll which found that 82% of Americans believe grocery stores should promote healthier items. The business case for limiting soda and sugary drink placement is even stronger when considering that 36% of shoppers indicated in the same poll that they would switch from their regular grocery store to a store that stocked sugary drinks in only one place. The evidence is even more compelling for parents who shop with their kids – an astounding 77% of parents say they would switch to a store that keeps soda in the soda aisle.

We encourage Albertsons to hear the voices of your customers and create the healthier grocery store environment they demand. Albertsons can be a leader in the food industry by limiting placement of sugary drinks to a designated soda aisle and replacing them with healthier alternatives, like water and

seltzer, at end caps, checkouts, and free-standing displays. CSPI plans to launch the Soda in the Soda Aisle consumer campaign over the next few months against the worst offenders. We look forward to working with Albertsons to change company policy to keep soda in the soda aisle and raise awareness of your efforts to create the healthier grocery shopping experience your customers want and deserve. You can reach CSPI at sjohn@cspinet.org or 202-777-8319.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Lurie". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Peter Lurie, M.D., M.P.H.
President