

SAFE FOOD COALITION

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The Honorable Thomas Massie
U.S. House of Representatives
2371 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

the Honorable Chellie Pingree
U.S. House of Representatives
2354 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

May 18, 2026

Dear Representative Massie and Representative Pingree,

The undersigned members of the Safe Food Coalition are writing to express our opposition to H.R. 7880, the Interstate Milk Freedom Act, which was introduced on March 9, 2026. This is the seventh time this bill has been introduced and represents yet another attempt to overturn the 1987 ban on the interstate sales of raw milk. Elimination of this ban would be a public health disaster, especially for young children.

The overwhelming consensus among public health professionals across the country is that pathogenic bacteria in raw milk can cause severe illness and even death. Pasteurization kills these pathogens. The widespread pasteurization of milk is one of public health's greatest success stories. In 1938, milk-borne outbreaks caused around 25% of all disease outbreaks from contaminated food and water. Today, this figure is about 1%.

E. coli O157:H7, a pathogen found in raw milk and raw cheese, is so dangerous that the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/food-safety/communication-resources/mary-mcgonigle-martin-video.html) classifies it as a bioterrorism agent. Young children, typically under age 5, suffer the most serious consequences. Of the children who develop an *E. coli* O157:H7 infection, 10-15% of them go on to develop Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome (HUS), a rare condition that destroys red blood cells and causes acute kidney failure. Hospitalization for a child with HUS can last from weeks to months depending on the severity of the illness. Here is one parent's story of her son's life-threatening illness that resulted from drinking raw milk: <https://www.cdc.gov/food-safety/communication-resources/mary-mcgonigle-martin-video.html>

The Interstate Milk Freedom Act would circumvent the 1987 interstate ban on raw milk put in place by the Food and Drug Administration. The ban results in foodborne illness outbreaks linked to raw milk being contained within a single state, therefore reducing the number of those who become ill.

Since the 1987 interstate ban on raw milk was enacted, nothing has changed regarding the safety of consuming raw milk. Raw milk is still causing outbreaks. The data demonstrating the serious health risk posed by raw milk is stark and irrefutable. From 2013 to 2018, [raw milk caused 75 outbreaks and sickened 675 people, while pasteurized milk caused just one outbreak with 32 illnesses](#), according to research published in the journal *Epidemiology and Infection*. Despite the fact that only [1-2% of Americans drink raw milk](#) compared to [69% who drink pasteurized milk](#), raw milk outbreaks far exceed those from pasteurized products.

In 2001, Organic Pastures Dairy Company, now called Raw Farm, began selling raw milk. In 2006, it had its first *E.coli* O157:H7 outbreak and continues to have outbreaks and recalls (See chart below). Its largest outbreak happened two years ago.¹

Outbreaks and Recalls Linked to Organic Pastures/Raw Farm

Date	Product	Contaminant	Recall/Illnesses
<u>September 2006</u>	Raw Milk	<i>E. coli</i> O157:H7	6 ill, 2 with Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome
<u>September 2007</u>	Raw Cream	<i>Listeria monocytogenes</i>	Recall Issued
<u>December 2007</u>	Raw Milk	<i>Campylobacter</i>	8 Illnesses
<u>September 2008</u>	Raw Cream	<i>Campylobacter</i>	Recall Issued
<u>November 2011</u>	Raw Milk	<i>E. coli</i> O157:H7	5 ill, 3 with Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome
<u>May 2012</u>	Raw Milk/Cream	<i>Campylobacter</i>	10 Illnesses
<u>October 2015</u>	Raw Milk	<i>Campylobacter</i>	Recall Issued
<u>January 2016</u>	Raw Milk	<i>E. coli</i> O157:H7	9 ill, 2 With Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome
<u>May 2023</u>	Raw Milk	<i>Campylobacter</i>	Recall Issued
<u>August 2023</u>	Unpasteurized Cheese	<i>Salmonella</i>	Recall Issued
<u>December 2023</u>	Raw Milk	<i>Salmonella</i>	19 Illnesses
<u>October 2024</u>	Raw Milk	<i>Salmonella</i>	171 Illnesses
<u>November 2024</u>	Raw Milk	<i>H5N1</i>	Recall Issued
<u>December 2024</u>	Raw Milk and Cream	<i>H5N1</i>	Recall Issued
<u>December 2024</u>	Unpasteurized Cheese	<i>E. coli</i> O157:H7	11 Illnesses, 2 with Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome
<u>March 2026</u>	Raw Milk and Unpasteurized Cheese	<i>E. coli</i> O157:H7	9 illnesses, 1 with Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome

If H.R. 7880 is enacted and the interstate ban on the sale of raw milk is lifted, Raw Farm, the largest raw milk dairy in the United States, could sell its milk across the country to any state that has some form of legalized raw milk. The more-than-likely result would be an increase in foodborne illness, leading to more hospitalizations and deaths.

Proponents of raw milk argue that careful farming practices make it safe, but even the most conscientious farmers cannot eliminate risk entirely. Cattle naturally carry bacteria such as Shiga

¹<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/74/wr/mm7427a1.htm#:~:text=Discussion.%20Consumption%20of%20commercially%20distributed%20raw%20milk,to%20be%20hospitalized%20among%20all%20age%20groups.>

toxin-producing *E. coli* (including *E.coli* O157:H7) in their intestines and lie in manure that contains billions of bacteria cells—it takes as few as ten cells to cause severe illness.

The current interstate ban does not prevent raw milk consumption. Each state ([now totaling 37](#)) can permit such sales *within* its state. It is unnecessary for states that already have legal access to raw milk to allow sales to consumers in other states that also provide legal access to raw milk. What H.R. 7880 would do, however, is allow one state with no raw milk safety regulations to allow the sale of raw milk to consumers in a state that has strict regulations. This could result in more and bigger outbreaks, with contaminated milk from a single dairy sickening many more children across multiple states.

Sincerely,

Center for Science in the Public Interest
Consumer Federation of America
Consumer Reports
Food & Water Watch
Institute for Food Safety and Nutrition Security
Stop Foodborne Illness

cc: Representative Warren Davidson (R-OH)
Representative Glenn Grothman (R-WI)
Representative Clay Higgins (R-LA)
Representative Scott Perry (R-PA)
Representative Chip Roy (R-TX)
Representative Lloyd Smucker (R-PA)
Representative Lauren Boebert (R-CO)
Representative Nancy Mace (R-SC)