

November 30, 2006

Mary Johnson, Esq.  
Federal Trade Commission  
Office of the Secretary  
Room H-135 (Annex R)  
600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20580

Re: Food Industry Marketing to Children Report: Paperwork Comment; FTC  
File No. P064504

Dear Ms. Johnson:

As an attorney who has worked in both the government regulatory and self-regulatory arenas, I wholeheartedly support the Federal Trade Commission (“FTC”) in its plan to obtain food company records pertaining to marketing to children; I believe that such a collection is essential to making any determinations as to what government action may be needed in the area of food and beverage advertising to children.

One particular area that I believe the FTC needs to help clarify is what demographics advertisers use in targeting a child audience. More specifically, the FTC should ascertain what is the threshold of the percentage and/or raw numbers of child viewers of a TV program (or visitors to a website, or readers of a magazine) that companies require before they will make an advertising buy to target that particular age group. For example, if 15% of an audience is composed of kids under the age of 12, will that be sufficient for an advertiser looking to reach that age group? Collecting as much information as possible about these benchmarks may ultimately be helpful if the government decides to bring legal action against, or altogether restrict, certain forms of child-directed advertising in the food and beverage arena.

One other area I would urge the FTC to look at closely in its collection of information is the research completed by food and beverage companies with respect to the ability of children under the age of 8 to critically comprehend advertising messages. In particular, it would be worthwhile to get detailed focus group studies in connection with specific ad campaigns directed at kids in this age group. Recent findings by the American Psychological Association have concluded that younger children do not truly understand the nature of advertising and are therefore extremely susceptible to its influence. If this is borne out by advertisers’ own studies, it would certainly provide a strong basis for a close look at government restrictions on the marketing of foods of minimal nutritional value to children under 8, especially in light of the conclusions contained in the Institute of Medicine’s recent report about the impact of advertising on children’s eating habits.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my views.

Sincerely,

Fred Cantor