

Dear:

We are writing in response to the proposed legislation being tabled in the House of Commons on Bill S-228 An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act (prohibiting food and beverage marketing directed at children) that paves the way for Health Canada to ban any form of marketing (advertising, sponsorship and promotions) of what it deems to be unhealthy food to children under the age of 17 by food and beverage companies.

Sport Matters Group (SMG) is a coalition of over 80 sport, physical activity and recreation organizations who believe that a values-based, ethical sport experience taking place in safe, inclusive and welcoming environments, along with regular and accessible physical activity and facilities required to participate are integral to Canadian culture and the development of our people, communities and nation.

As leaders in the Canadian sport community, the SMG welcomes the federal government's efforts to improve the health of our children and youth by protecting them from marketing tactics that promote unhealthy foods. While we fully support any government effort to help young Canadians make better nutrition choices, there will be serious repercussions if the new legislation prevents some companies from investing in sport programming for children and youth.

Approximately \$1.98B is spent on sponsorship in Canada. Together, professional and amateur sport, account for 53% of the sponsorship industry. Partners such as Tim Hortons, McDonalds, and Coca Cola, to name a few, have demonstrated over many years that they share a common interest in advancing sport and physical activity priorities. With implementation of the Bill and the regulations possibly coming into effect by 2019, sport organizations and sponsored athletes are already starting to feel the impact as contracts come up for renewal.

Bill S-228 and the anticipated regulations around sponsorship will mean a substantial drop in private sector contributions to sport at every level, from grassroots to high performance. This will result in cutting off sport programs to thousands of children and youth right across the country – the opposite effect from what the legislation is intended to do. Today, national sport organizations are being advised that some food and beverage companies are cutting back on their investments in high performance sport in anticipation of the new legislation, making it that much more difficult to prepare our best athletes for top-flight international competition.

For children and youth sport plays a vital role in their growth and development. Creating more opportunities for children and youth to participate in sport for health benefits should be a priority, rather than limiting private sector support. Every Canadian Olympian and Paralympian has been inspired by an Olympian or Paralympian that came before them. Any loss of private sector support may mean fewer role models and a long-term ripple effect that may see fewer Canadian podium performances.

The SMG community welcomes the opportunity to work with officials to consider options that support the federal government's efforts to protect children and youth from marketing tactics that promote unhealthy foods, but in a way that limits the negative impact of losing private sector supporters. We look forward to speaking with you soon to share our ideas.

Yours in sport,

Lindsay (Hugenholtz) Sherk
Senior Leader