

From: Stephen Fox <stephen@santafefineart.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 13, 2016 9:49 AM
To: P65Public Comments
Subject: please use this Corrected Statement from New Mexico State Senator Gerald Ortiz y Pino:re: Labeling Aspartame as Carcinogenic

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Statement from New Mexico State Senator Gerald Ortiz y Pino:

To the California Carcinogen Identification Commission:

Dear Colleagues in Government:

I am a State Senator in New Mexico, where I have served for three terms. I would like to share my experience in attempting to pass legislation here in our state which would have banned the use of the chemical aspartame in foods and beverages sold here. On four occasions I introduced legislation to this effect. I provided the committees to which the bills were referred extensive information on the danger to public health posed by this additive. Experts from around the country came to testify in support. Yet we lost each time.

In every instance a veritable army of lobbyists descended on the hearing--not to refute the scientific findings we provided, but to simply insist that the chemical had been ruled safe by the FDA and that that should end all discussion of the matter. The problem, of course, is that the FDA made its ruling years ago based on political influence and faulty information. Subsequent research has clarified both the health danger of aspartame and the falsehood underlying its claim to be effective in reducing obesity. Yet the FDA, under terrific pressure from the soft drink industry, steadfastly refuses to re-examine this carcinogenic substance.

It is with this background that I heard of your efforts in California to take the simple, common sense step to label aspartame as a carcinogen. I applaud the effort and hope that your decision makers will have greater success in resisting the pressure tactics of industry lobbyists than we did in New Mexico.

In a democratic society we are all responsible for how public health policy is developed. Science, not corporate profit, should be the criterion employed. When Federal officials refuse to act responsibly, you at the State level will have to step up. Thank you for doing so.

Sincerely, State Senator Gerald Ortiz y Pino, New Mexico Senate District
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