INTERIM RESOLUTION 2015-007

REQUESTING THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ENCOURAGE THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO AMEND THE FOOD ALLERGEN LABELING AND CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT TO INCLUDE MAMMALIAN PRODUCTS ON THE LIST OF MAJOR FOOD ALLERGENS AND REQUIRE LABELING OF THE ALPHA-GAL-CONTAINING MEDICATIONS, COSMETICS, AND OTHER PRODUCTS; AND TO URGE THE UNITED STATES FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION TO INCLUDE MAMMALIAN PRODUCTS ON THE LIST OF MAJOR FOOD ALLERGENS AND SUPPORT THE LABELING OF ALPHA-GAL-CONTAINING MEDICATIONS, COSMETICS, AND OTHER PRODUCTS.

WHEREAS, galactose-alpha-1, 3-galactose, commonly known as Alpha-gal, is a carbohydrate produced by mammals; and

WHEREAS, the galactose carbohydrate can be found in mammalian meat, dairy, and other products derived from mammalian sources including gelatin, glycerin, and magnesium stearate; and

WHEREAS, Alpha-gal allergies are a reaction to galactose-alpha-1, 3-galactose, when the body is overloaded with immunoglobulin E antibodies on contact with the galactose carbohydrate; and

WHEREAS, Alpha-gal allergies were first reported in a medical journal in 2007; and

WHEREAS, a typical allergic reaction to Alpha-gal has a delayed onset, occurring three to eight (3-8) hours after the consumption of mammalian meat, dairy, or other products derived from mammalian sources, instead of the typical rapid onset with most food allergies; and

WHEREAS, allergic reactions to Alpha-gal vary but can include hives, swelling of the skin, anaphylaxis, and death; and

WHEREAS, bites from the lone star tick, which transfer the galactose carbohydrate to the victim, have been implicated in the development of this
delayed allergic response that is triggered by the consumption of mammalian meat, dairy, or other products derived from mammalian sources; and

WHEREAS, Alpha-gal allergies most often occur in the central and southern states, such as Arkansas, where the lone star tick is more prevalent; and

WHEREAS, since the reaction to eating mammalian meat, dairy, or other products derived from mammalian sources is delayed by several hours, an Alpha-gal allergy is often misdiagnosed or not identified; and

WHEREAS, no official statistics have been collected or reported on the incidence of Alpha-gal allergies; and

WHEREAS, since 2007, researchers across the globe in Australia, France, Spain, Japan, Germany, Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Central America, and the United States have recorded cases of the Alpha-gal allergy; and

WHEREAS, in Arkansas, two hundred seventy (270) patients were diagnosed between January 2013 and September 2015 in thirty-three (33) of the seventy-five (75) counties in Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, at least two (2) members of the General Assembly suffer from the Alpha-gal allergy; and

WHEREAS, people who are affected by the Alpha-gal allergy have to be constantly vigilant about the products they consume because an allergic reaction can be severe and life-threatening; and

WHEREAS, mammalian meat, dairy, or other products derived from mammalian sources are not easily identifiable; and

WHEREAS, information about mammalian-derived products in medication is difficult to obtain, unclear, inconsistently reported, and sometimes incorrect, according to British researchers; and
WHEREAS, gelatin derived from mammals can be used as a clarifying agent in fruit juice and wine, can be used as a binding agent in some tablets, capsules, and suppositories, and can otherwise be found in candy, food thickeners, dips, glazes, icing, fat substitutes, sausage coatings, salami, tinned hams, shampoo, collagen implants, sutures, and contact lenses; and

WHEREAS, glycerin is a food additive found in canned goods, candy, fondant, processed fruits, jams, energy bars, medications, syrups, toothpaste, mouthwash, and tobacco; and

WHEREAS, magnesium stearate derived from mammals can be used as a lubricating agent for nutritional supplements and medical tablets, capsules, and powders, can be used as a binding agent in candy, can be used as an anti-caking agent in some foods, and can otherwise be found in baby formulas; and

WHEREAS, at least one (1) patient in Arkansas with Alpha-gal allergies died after taking a medication that contained Alpha-gal; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, the General Assembly enacted Acts 2015 (Reg. Sess.), No. 1247, which created the Task Force on Alpha-gal to "promote awareness and encourage efforts to treat Alpha-gal in the state" and to "make recommendations designed to improve and increase knowledge and treatment throughout the state for Alpha-gal, especially for emergency room healthcare professionals"; and

WHEREAS, the membership of the Task Force on Alpha-gal is multifaceted with members representing public health, insurance, agriculture, hospitality, and medical fields; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force on Alpha-gal is in the process of submitting a Citizen’s Petition to the United States Food and Drug Administration urging the agency to support inclusion of mammalian meat, dairy, and other products derived from mammalian sources on the list of major food allergens and to support the labeling of Alpha-gal containing medications, cosmetics, and other products; and
WHEREAS, as a result of these difficulties in identifying product ingredients, individual Arkansans are at risk of severe Alpha-gal allergic reactions, including those that may lead to death,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF THE NINETIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

THAT the Arkansas Legislative Council:

(1) Encourage the United States Congress to amend the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004, Pub. L. No. 101-624, to include mammalian meat, dairy, and other products derived from mammalian sources on the list of major food allergens and require labeling of the Alpha-gal-containing medications, cosmetics, and other consumer products; and

(2) Urge the United States Food and Drug Administration to support inclusion of the mammalian meat, dairy, and other products derived from mammalian sources on the list of major food allergens and support the labeling of Alpha-gal-containing medications, cosmetics, and other products.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT upon adoption of this resolution an appropriate copy be provided by the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives to the United States Food and Drug Administration, the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Arkansas congressional delegation.

Respectfully submitted,

Representative Julie Mayberry
District 27

By: JMB/JMB