

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 10, 2013

Mr. Philippe Dauman  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Viacom Inc.  
1515 Broadway  
New York, New York 10036

Ms. Cyma Zarghami  
President, Nickelodeon  
Viacom Inc.  
1515 Broadway  
New York, New York 10036

Dear Mr. Dauman and Ms. Zarghami,

As a leading multi-media entertainment destination for children and adolescents, Nickelodeon has a special opportunity—and responsibility—to help address our nation's childhood obesity epidemic. We ask that you implement a clear policy to guide the marketing of food to children on Nickelodeon's various media platforms, including the advertisements on your channels, Internet sites, and mobile platforms.

Over the past three decades, childhood obesity has doubled among children and tripled among adolescents, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Obese youth are at greater risk of having high cholesterol or high blood pressure, prediabetes, bone and joint problems, sleep apnea and self-esteem issues. Obese youth are also more likely to be obese as adults, and are at higher risk for adult health problems including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, cancer, and osteoarthritis. The medical costs associated with obesity have a significant economic impact on our nation's health care system, totaling approximately \$147 billion in 2008.

While there are many factors that contribute to childhood obesity, food marketing plays an important role. A 2006 Institute of Medicine report requested by Congress found that television advertisements influenced children's food and beverage preferences and the requests they make to their parents. Nickelodeon is in a key position to help safeguard the health and well-being of our kids, and your decisions on what products are permitted to be advertised through your network have an impact on our children's diets and long-term health prospects.

According to a 2010 report by the Yale University Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, Nickelodeon currently airs a quarter of the food advertisements that are viewed by

children under 12. In 2012, the Center for Science in the Public Interest found that 69 percent of foods advertised on Nickelodeon were of poor nutritional quality, including fast foods, sugary cereals, and sweet snacks.

We applaud the initiatives that Nickelodeon has taken to promote healthy lifestyles for children, including through health and wellness messaging, but remain concerned that Nickelodeon continues to run advertisements for food and beverage products of poor nutritional quality.

One year ago last week, the Walt Disney Corporation took the important step of announcing that it would no longer accept advertisements for unhealthy foods on television, radio, and websites directed at children. Like other companies, Disney has found success in focusing their food marketing on healthy foods that contribute to the health and fitness of their viewers. Given Nickelodeon's commitment to fighting childhood obesity and responsibility to the youth that comprise your audience, we ask that the company promptly take similar action to implement strong nutrition standards for all of its marketing to children. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



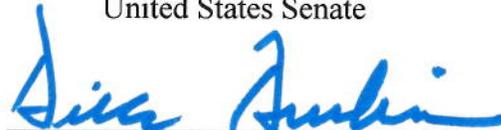
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United States Senate



John D. Rockefeller IV  
United States Senate



Tom Harkin  
United States Senate



Richard J. Durbin  
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