

Rep. Peter Welch on Wednesday called on the Food and Drug Administration to investigate a new syrup product that appears to violate FDA labeling rules.

The "All Natural Syrup" marketed by Log Cabin Syrup, a division of Pinnacle Foods LLC, appears to include ingredients the FDA does not allow in products labeled as "natural."

"Vermont's hardworking maple sugar makers are known far and wide for producing the highest quality maple syrup available. Any artificial syrup product masquerading as 'natural' confuses consumers and dilutes the value of one of Vermont's finest products," Welch said. "I am asking the FDA to take swift action to enforce its regulations and preserve honesty in labeling."

The House Committee on Energy and Commerce, of which Welch is a member, has jurisdiction over the FDA.

Welch joins Vermont Secretary of Agriculture Roger Allbee in urging regulators to determine whether Log Cabin Syrup has violated FDA standards.

"Pure Vermont maple syrup is a signature product of our state, and any product that is mislabeled and tries to imitate it must be dealt with," Allbee said. "Congressman Welch's letter to the FDA is greatly appreciated."

Welch's letter is copied below:

September 8, 2010

Margaret Hamburg, M.D.
Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration

Welch calls on FDA to investigate "natural" syrup product

Wednesday, 08 September 2010 00:00

10903 New Hampshire Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20993

Dear Dr. Hamburg,

Log Cabin Syrup, a division of Pinnacle Foods LLC, recently began marketing what it is calling a new, "All Natural Syrup." According to FDA guidelines, a product labeled "natural" may not contain added colors, flavors or artificial substances.

This so-called "natural" product includes the following ingredients: syrup (brown rice, sugar, maple [4 percent]), water, natural flavor, xanthan gum (natural thickener), caramel color, citric acid. Log Cabin's product appears to violate the FDA regulations.

While most Vermonters have a discerning eye – and palate – for real maple syrup, the countless consumers outside of our state who have come to expect quality from natural Vermont products may be fooled by this misleading labeling. Therefore, I ask your agency to immediately investigate this product and determine whether it is in violation of FDA policies.

I look forward to hearing back from your agency on the progress of your investigation.

Sincerely,

PETER WELCH
Member of Congress