

GREATER V GREATER VALLEY GLEN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: Government Relations

MEETING DATE: Jan 21, 2009

(To be submitted to President at least 120 hours in advance of monthly board meeting)

PROPOSED MOTION FOR BOARD ACTION:

“When food companies hide the presence of MSG (or free glutamic acid) in products, consumers are misled and lose the ability to choose what they put into their bodies. It is estimated that 2% - 40% of the public are negatively affected or become quite ill by the presence of MSG. Food companies may hide MSG under 40+ names that consumers would not recognize, (i.e. gelatin, natural flavor, soy sauce, seasonings, autolyzed yeast, calcium caseinate, textured protein, yeast food, etc.). The Greater Valley Glen Council wants to see improved product labeling and suggests the following: When there is a new product on the market or a recipe change, the food manufacturer must measure for free glutamic acid and disclose it as MSG on the label with levels present in milligrams.”

PROPOSED COMMUNITY IMPACT STATEMENT (if applicable) – 100 words or less:

(Attach to any applicable Council File)

“When food companies hide the presence of MSG (or free glutamic acid) in products, consumers are misled and lose the ability to choose what they put into their bodies. It is estimated that 5% - 40% of the public are negatively affected or become quite ill by the presence of MSG. Food companies may hide MSG under 40+ names that consumers would not recognize, (i.e. gelatin, natural flavor, soy sauce, seasonings, autolyzed yeast, calcium caseinate, textured protein, yeast food, etc.). The Greater Valley Glen Council wants to see improved product labeling and suggests the following: When there is a new product on the market or a recipe change, the food manufacturer must measure for free glutamic acid and disclose it as MSG on the label with levels present in milligrams.”

COMMUNITY BENEFIT STATEMENT (if applicable – 100 words or less)*

***all non-operation expenditures must attach Agency or Department Letter Requesting item(s) or donation(s) to Committee prior to Committee vote;**

Give Greater Valley Glen stakeholders an opportunity to decide for themselves what they wish to eat. Greater Valley Glen can be a leader nationally on the product labeling issue. Letters to be sent to the LA City Council, GVGC’s Sacramento representatives as well as GVGC’s Congressional and U.S. Senate representatives.

PROPOSED BUDGET EXPENDITURE (if any): None

IMPACT ON FISCAL YEAR BUDGET ALLOCATION BY CATEGORY & QUARTER:

(1st quarter 7/1-9/30 – 2nd quarter 10/1-12/31 – 3rd quarter 1/1 - 3/31 –
4th quarter 4/1-6/30) No impact

All Non Operational Expense Motions must attach Agency or Department Letter Requesting item(s) or donation(s);

General Information and Arguments related to MSG...

The freedom to choose what you and your family eat is being ignored by politicians and food companies. People believe they are avoiding it in their diets, but are being misled. Food manufacturers, who realize many people prefer not to have MSG in their food, have adapted by using so-called “clean labels.” These

labels hide MSG under names that consumers won't recognize, such as hydrolyzed soy protein. Some manufacturers even label their products as "No MSG" or "No Added MSG" when MSG is present within another ingredient.

MSG is Always In:

- Autolyzed yeast
- Calcium caseinate
- Gelatin
- Glutamate
- Glutamic acid
- Hydrolyzed protein
- Monopotassium glutamate
- Monosodium glutamate
- Sodium caseinate
- Textured protein
- Yeast extract
- Yeast food
- Yeast Nutrient

MSG is Often In:

- Barley Malt
- Bouillon
- Broth
- Carrageenan
- Enzyme-modified substances
- Flavoring
- Flavors
- Malt Extract
- Malt flavoring
- Maltodextrin
- Natural flavor/seasonings
- Natural pork/beef/chicken flavoring
- Pectin
- Protein-fortified substances
- Seasonings
- Soy protein
- Soy protein isolate or concentrate
- Soy sauce
- Soy sauce extract
- Stock
- Vegetable gum
- Whey protein
- Whey protein isolate or concentrate
- Spice

MSG can be found in shampoos, soaps, cosmetics, vitamins, medicines. (watch for the word protein or amino acids). It can be in candy, milk, chewing gum. Even food that is labeled "organic," can have MSG. Even meats can be rinsed with MSG phosphate substance (this is normally not mentioned on the meat's label). Salad mix and vegetables can be rinsed with citric acid (which may have MSG in it).

People have different tolerance levels for MSG. If the amount was written on the label, people could add up the MSG milligrams and make sure not to exceed their tolerance level.

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The government says that MSG is safe for the general population when consumed at usual levels. However, according to the FDA, severe reactions occur in some people. (They estimate 2% of the population). It can result in numbness, headache, burning sensation, tingling, facial pressure or tightness, chest pain, nausea, rapid heartbeat, drowsiness, weakness or difficulty in breathing for asthmatics. Estimates of how many people are affected can range from 2% (FDA) up to 40% (Independent Research Organizations) of the population. Reactions can occur hours after eating, so attributing them to MSG can be difficult. 60 Minutes did a show about individuals who were hospitalized and almost died when consuming MSG. Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, seizures and stroke have been found to be associated with MSG. Migraine headaches are the most common side effect. MSG also contributes to obesity. Even if only 2% of the population are affected, this is 6 million people. If 6 million people are getting ill, shouldn't the government do something about it?

American companies add 45 million pounds of hydrolyzed protein (a form of MSG) to their products each year. The amount of MSG used in American foods has increased by 15 times what it was in 1969. Reports that people have died. There are books about the toxicity of MSG. Excitotoxins: the Taste that Kills by Dr. Blaylock, a neurosurgeon. In Bad Taste, the MSG Syndrome by Schwartz. The LA Times called In Bad Taste, "Eye-Opening" and said it should be read by anyone who gets migraines.

Author Blaylock says that 75% - 90% of the foods in a grocery store are "enhanced" with MSG. He calls it the "crack cocaine" of the food industry.

Why is it added? It is cheap and a flavor enhancer and can hide unpleasant or stale tastes. Its use started in China. (often called Chinese restaurant syndrome).

There has been an increase in migraine headaches in general public. Migraines cost employers \$13 billion. Over any 2 week period, one in eight people lose productive time due to migraine pain.

Labeling is important. In fact, recently, the FDA examined 85 independent cookie and ice cream manufacturers and found nearly 25 percent of their products contained unlabeled ingredients.

The Glutamate Association has been extended an invitation for our general meeting. Their purpose is to support the MSG industry. FDA and Glutamate Association do not want labeling because they say it will "frighten consumers and scare away business."

Jack Samuels of the Truth in Labeling nonprofit has also been invited. He says he could drive up from San Diego, but I am concerned that it will not be worth his while if he only gets two minutes to speak. His website is www.Truthinlabeling.org Samuels has been rushed to the hospital after consuming MSG.

Neither will want to attend to speak only for two minutes...

Boxer and Feinstein say they support labeling but have done nothing. The food industry has a powerful lobby. Senator Ted Kennedy tried to enhance food labeling about 20 years ago, but failed against the food lobby. .

Enhanced labeling has never been passed by a political body. The GVGC will be the first to support this. If passed, our motion will go on the Internet for all to see and follow. We will no doubt get positive attention for our forward-thinking. Maybe we can influence the politicians to do something.