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On behalf of the U.S. Canola Association representing American farmers and their industry partners, we are writing to raise serious concerns about recent activities surrounding the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) Commission and the public messaging regarding canola and seed oils.

The MAHA Commission's recent report casts doubt on the healthfulness of seed oils like canola oil without any strong scientific basis. While the report avoids outright statements that these oils are harmful, it implies it through suggestive and speculative language.

MAHA and the Administration have also encouraged, supported, and endorsed statements by food companies and restaurants that indicate a shift away from the use of canola or seed oils. In some cases, those announcements have suggested that alternatives with far higher saturated fat levels are healthier than canola and seed oils. Those inferences are counter to the overwhelming consensus of health and nutrition science and are counter to common sense. These actions are misleading and potentially harmful to the public as well as those who rely on facts and science to inform nutrition policy and food choices.

Scientific consensus affirms the importance of including dietary fat as part of a balanced eating pattern, particularly unsaturated fats, which play a vital role in reducing the risk of heart disease. Fat provides energy, supports cellular structure, and enables the absorption of essential nutrients such as vitamins A, D, E, and K (Sacks et al., 2017). However, not all fats affect health in the

same way. Leading health authorities recommend limiting saturated and trans fats because they raise levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol and, in the case of trans fats, lower high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol. In contrast, unsaturated fats, such as those found in canola oil, can help lower LDL cholesterol when they replace saturated fats in the diet (Schwingshackl et al., 2018; Lin et al., 2013).

A substantial and consistent body of peer-reviewed research supports the safety and nutritional benefits of seed oils. The American Heart Association has recognized canola oil for its ability to reduce cholesterol and lower the risk of heart disease (Amiri et al., 2020; Ghobadi et al., 2019). It is naturally low in saturated fat and high in beneficial unsaturated fats, including omega-3 fatty acids (Jackson et al., 2024). Despite these well-established facts, the MAHA Commission's report disregards them entirely and fails to provide a balanced or scientifically rigorous evaluation of current nutrition literature (Petersen et al., 2025).

In 2006, the United States Food and Drug Administration authorized a qualified health claim for canola oil, citing evidence that consuming approximately 1.5 tablespoons of canola oil daily in place of saturated fat may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease (Lin et al., 2013). In 2018, the same qualified health claim was extended to edible oils high in oleic acid, defined as containing at least 70 percent oleic acid per serving, including high-oleic canola oil (Amiri et al., 2020). These decisions were based on substantial scientific evidence reviewed by federal regulatory authorities.

The American Heart Association also includes pure canola, olive, and corn oils in its Heart-Check Food Certification Program. These vegetable oils meet specific nutrition criteria and have been approved due to their association with reduced risk of heart disease (Sacks et al., 2017; Pourrajab et al., 2022). The Heart-Check mark on product labels helps consumers quickly identify heart-healthy options in grocery stores. In addition to the American Heart Association, other leading health organizations—including the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Diabetes Association, and the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics—consistently recommend canola oil as a healthy source of fat for everyday cooking and meal preparation (Petersen et al., 2024; Ghobadi et al., 2019).

A major concern with the MAHA Commission's report is its reliance on a single, outdated study to suggest that seed oils may cause inflammation. The 2008 paper referenced in the report primarily focuses on the Mediterranean diet and flaxseed consumption. It does not examine canola oil or other seed oils directly, nor does it provide a meaningful comparison between seed oils and other fats. Nevertheless, the Commission uses this study to imply a link between seed oils and inflammation—without any credible or current scientific backing. This type of selective and misleading use of evidence not only lacks rigor, but it also undermines public understanding and trust in nutritional science.

This selective use of evidence is especially troubling given the broader public messaging now surrounding the report. By creating a perception of harm where none has been scientifically proven, the Commission risks driving public behavior based on fallacy rather than fact—while simultaneously damaging the reputation of safe, nutritious crops produced by American farmers. In an effort to encourage the MAHA Commission to diversify its research and consider up-to-date scientific findings, we are sharing a compilation of studies that highlight the health benefits of seed oils, which can be found in the list of references below. It is essential that the MAHA Commission utilize consistently supported current research rather than relying on a few selectively chosen or outdated outliers.

However, our greatest concern is not the report itself, but the pattern of promoting, encouraging, and endorsing anti-seed oil movements. Examples include featuring Steak 'n Shake in a national Fox News interview alongside Secretary Kennedy—immediately after announcing it was removing seed oils and Secretary Kennedy applauding Starbucks for merely *suggesting* it might make changes to seed oil usage.

There seems to be, in effect, a coordinated pressure campaign that promotes companies with public praise and national media exposure for eliminating seed oils from their products. Businesses have a right to make their own decisions on what products they use, but the Administration should not infer to the public that there is a nutrition or health benefit associated with these decisions. It's not a regulatory action, but it functions like one and it has a significant impact on some U.S. farmers and businesses.

Undermining the public perception of seed oils without scientific justification, while simultaneously rewarding companies for removing them, damages consumer trust, distorts the marketplace, and unfairly harms some American farmers and businesses.

We urge your Administration to:

1. Reinforce that federal food policy will be driven by **evidence**, not influence or optics.
2. Ensure that **science-based viewpoints** are fully reflected in all MAHA-related processes and actions.
3. Stop **unofficial endorsement actions** that incentivize companies to make scientifically unsupported changes that are not based on nutrition and health concerns.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We remain ready to work with your Administration to support a food system that is science-based and serves the interests of farmers and the American people.

Respectfully,



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Cc:
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