

Good afternoon Chair Booth and Vice Chair Odoms-Young.

My name is Kate MacKenzie, Executive Director of the New York City Mayor's Office of Food Policy. I am honored to be here today.

As the Dietary Patterns Subcommittee reviews the relationships between dietary patterns and cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes, I'd like to draw your attention to work New York City has already done to develop standards and practices to help lower the risk of certain chronic diseases and make it easier for New Yorkers served by City agencies to access foods that have less added sugar, lower sodium, and more plant-based protein options.

We rolled out a lifestyle medicine program in our public hospitals with a culturally diverse patient population that emphasizes a healthy plant-based eating pattern. The program's success aligns with the wealth of scientific evidence on the benefits of dietary patterns with mostly whole and minimally processed foods from plants, including plant proteins such as beans, peas, lentils, nuts, and seeds.

We appreciate the Committee's application of a health equity lens to its dairy recommendations due to differing lactose intolerance that may exist among people of different ancestry. Our Food Standards were developed to help to combat structural inequities that make healthy eating inaccessible and contribute to the disproportionate burden of diet-related conditions among Black and Latino New Yorkers and New Yorkers with low incomes. We envision a future where dairy is not necessarily a daily recommendation for all in the Guidelines, in words or pictures. Such products can still provide adequate nutritional value, while being sensitive to the variable inclusion of dairy in different dietary patterns. The inclusion of fortified plant-based beverages and yogurts as alternatives align with the interrelated goals of improved individual, community, and planetary health.

Finally, we encourage the committee to focus recommendations on sustainability. New data shows that roughly 20% of NYC's greenhouse gas emissions are tied to food. Animal-based foods tend to make up the majority of food-related GHG emissions. Our goal is to reduce these emissions by 33% by 2030, and to do this we must ensure a sustainable food system that helps local economies, protects the environment, and promotes long-term public health.

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute to this important discussion.