



Wednesday February 2, 2022

The Honorable Lori Trahan
United States House of Representatives
2439 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Trahan,

Thank you for your letter dated January 25, 2022 regarding sodium nitrite. We extend our deepest condolences to the families and loved ones personally affected by suicide, and we appreciate your effort on this important issue.

At Amazon, we take customer safety seriously. All products sold in our store must comply with applicable laws and regulations and we have a robust product safety program to protect our customers. Our protections include proactive seller vetting, listing restrictions, and continuous monitoring of the more than five billion attempted daily changes to product listing detail pages. Our proprietary tools constantly monitor customer feedback and external data to identify products in our store that might be unsafe. Our teams of safety professionals also monitor our store to identify products that are unsafe because they do not have legitimate consumer uses.

Sodium nitrite is a widely-used nitrite salt that has many applications and is offered by other retailers, including Walmart and Grainger. It is a common food additive used to preserve meats and fish, either by itself or mixed with table salt. It is also found as a chemical ingredient in low concentrations in household products, such as fertilizers and cleaners. Amazon is unaware of any legal restrictions in the United States on the sale of sodium nitrite, and we have not received any state or federal regulatory takedown requests for these products. Amazon makes a wide selection of products available to our customers because we trust that they will use those products as intended by the manufacturers. Amazon detail pages provide product information that allows customers to make informed purchasing decisions, but are not a substitute for manufacturer-provided labels, warnings, and instructions.

Like many widely-available consumer products, sodium nitrite can unfortunately be misused. When customers report a death or hospitalization that may be associated with a product, our systems flag the incident and we immediately investigate. We evaluate any serious injury or death, regardless of the potential cause, and take appropriate action. We continue to re-evaluate our incident detection tools to ensure they are accurate.

HiMedia Laboratories became a vendor in 2015 through standard contracting policies and procedures that Amazon uses for vendors worldwide. Vendors create their product listing pages by providing product information through an automated process, and must follow all Amazon

rules and policies. Amazon relies on an automated system to place purchase orders from some vendors, including HiMedia, and we have not encountered a high volume of customer complaints with respect to HiMedia-branded products.

The safety of children and minors is our highest priority, and we have parental controls in place where technologies allow. In our store, our Conditions of Use with our customers explicitly require that a minor (under age 18) may use Amazon Services *only* with the involvement of a parent or guardian. For parents who choose to allow their teenagers aged 13 to 17 to use their accounts, the Amazon Teens service provides parents with full oversight of purchases and, by default, requires parental approval for the teen to complete a purchase. Our review has not found any teen accounts associated with the purchase of industrial sodium nitrite products.

Amazon has also made a number of resources available to our customers who may be in crisis. In our store, searches for the word “suicide” present customers with a banner at the top of their search results with the phone number for the National Suicide Prevention Hotline. Alexa can also direct customers to the Hotline if customers ask about suicide. Twitch, an interactive livestreaming service, provides users a list of mental health resources, including direct communication with a trained crisis counselor courtesy of the Crisis Text Line.

Thank you for your letter, and we welcome the opportunity to work with your office further on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Huseman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brian" being more prominent than the last name "Huseman".

Brian Huseman
Vice President, Public Policy

CC:

Representative David B. McKinley, P.E.
Representative David Cicilline
Representative Susan Wild
Representative Jamie Raskin
Representative Kathy Castor
Representative Mark DeSaulnier