

Generated



2002, in Washington, D.C. The National Institute of Standards and Technology and the National Conference on Weights and Measures (NCWM) sponsored this forum in response to requests from U.S. manufacturers who want the option of labeling packages with only metric units. The purpose of the forum was to initiate a collaborative effort between business, government and other interested parties to eliminate regulatory barriers to metric-only labeling on packaged goods.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is the agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce responsible for directing and coordinating efforts by Federal departments and agencies to implement metric usage under the Metric Conversion Act of 1975. Transition to the metric system in the United States is to be accomplished on a voluntary basis with business and consumers deciding when it is most convenient and advantageous to bring about change in the marketplace. For more than 95 years, NIST has worked with the NCWM to ensure equity in the marketplace through the development of uniform laws and regulations. The NCWM’s membership includes weights and measures officials from around the world and also includes representatives of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and other federal agencies. Most importantly, it includes thousands of members from the industries they oversee, and they use their open forums to develop a wide variety of documentary standards relating to packaging and labeling, methods of sale for commodities, and other important subjects. This is one of the reasons that the states, through the NCWM, are the leaders in so many facets of weights and measures supervision, such as net quantity of contents verification and the inspection and testing of weighing and measuring instruments. I am pleased that NIST is working closely with NCWM on these and other issues.

In 1999 the NCWM changed the Uniform Packaging and Labeling Regulations to permit metric-only quantity statements on products subject to state jurisdiction. I am also pleased and impressed that the states have taken the lead in eliminating a barrier to metric-only labeling.

Under the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act (FPLA),



