Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 19, 2007

E. Neville Isdell
Chairman, Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer
The Coca-Cola Company
P.O. Box 1734
Atlanta, GA 30301

Dear Mr. Isdell,

I am writing to you to express my great concern about the role that food and beverage marketing geared at children – particularly advertising aired on television during children's programs – is having on children's nutritional and dietary choices. In particular, I am concerned that the prevalence of advertisements on children's television for junk food, fast food, and other foods wholly lacking in nutritional value is one of the root causes of America's childhood obesity epidemic, which the United States Surgeon General has identified as "the fastest growing cause of disease and death in America." I recently corresponded with the Federal Communications Commission on this matter and you may find these letters here: http://markey.house.gov/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=2823&Itemid=46

In addition, this Friday, June 22nd, I will chair a hearing in the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet entitled "Images that Kids See on the Screen." At this hearing, the Subcommittee will explore the link between TV advertising and childhood obesity, and whether regulatory or legislative solutions are needed to restrict food marketing on television to combat this serious public health issue.

One recent development our Subcommittee will examine is Kellogg Company's agreement to place significant restrictions on the manner in which it will market food to children. Among other concessions, all food advertised on media (TV, radio, print, and third-party Web sites) that have an audience of 50 percent or more of children under age 12 will have to meet Kellogg's new nutrition standards. Kellogg will continue its practice of not advertising to children younger than six. And Kellogg will not: (1) advertise to children any foods in schools and preschools that include kids under age 12; (2) sponsor product placements for any products in any medium primarily directed at kids under age 12; (3) use licensed characters on mass-media advertising directed primarily to kids under age 12; and (4) use branded toys in connection with foods that do not meet the nutrition standards.

I recognize that many other companies have undertaken efforts, as a member of the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative, to shift the mix of advertising messages to children 12 and under to encourage healthier dietary changes and healthy lifestyles. This is notable, because your company and the other members of this initiative

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account for more than two-thirds of the children's food and beverage advertising expenditures.

Yet the voluntary commitments that form the basis of this initiative are inferior to those announced by Kellogg. In short, Kellogg – which is a member of the same initiative – has vaulted ahead of the rest of the food and beverage industry. Indeed, Kellogg's voluntary commitments demonstrate that food and beverage companies can market their products to children in a socially responsible way. For example, while Kellogg agreed to conform to specific, publicly available nutrition standards that were negotiated with public health experts, the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative allows each member company to develop its own, private and potentially weak nutritional standards.

I would like to know whether your company will commit to implementing the same marketing restrictions Kellogg has announced, and if so, your timeframe for doing so. Such information will help inform the Subcommittee and the public as to additional steps that may be warranted to safeguard kids from junk food ads during children's television programming.

Parents have an undeniable responsibility to steer their children toward healthy choices and the growing problem of childhood obesity cannot be attributed solely to advertising. Yet your company, as one of the world's largest food and beverage manufacturers, can play a role in solving the childhood obesity problem through socially responsible advertising practices and I urge you to do so.

Please respond to this letter by June 29, 2007. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call me or have your staff contact Maureen Flood at 202-226-2424. Thank you in advance for your time and attention in responding.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Markey

Edward J. Markey
Chairman
House Subcommittee on
Telecommunications and the Internet