

West Virginia bans harmful food additives in school meals

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In a significant step toward improving public health, Governor Patrick Morrisey of West Virginia has signed House Bill 2354 into law. The new legislation bans the use of specific artificial food dyes and preservatives in school meals across West Virginia. The phased rollout of the law begins on August 1, 2025, aiming to ensure healthier food options for students statewide.

“West Virginia ranks among the lowest in public health metrics, making it an ideal place to spearhead the 'Make America Healthy Again' initiative,” said Governor Morrisey. “By removing harmful chemicals from our food, we are taking meaningful steps to safeguard our residents' health and protect our children from long-term learning and developmental issues. I extend my gratitude to the Legislature, HHS Secretary Robert Kennedy, and the Trump Administration for supporting this movement in West Virginia.”

The law categorises certain food additives as hazardous and bars their use in school nutrition programs beginning in 2025. A broader restriction, including preservatives such as butylated hydroxyanisole and propylparaben, will take effect on January 1, 2028, applying to all food products sold within the state. The phased implementation allows food producers time to adapt while helping to prevent sharp price increases.

Governor Morrissey highlighted the bill's significance in improving public health. "This legislation is a crucial step toward providing West Virginians with healthier food choices," he stated. "As we move forward, I look forward to promoting policies that enhance health outcomes, support job retention, and acknowledge the roles of the FDA and supply chain in this effort."

The measure has been welcomed by public health advocates and parents who are concerned about the impact of artificial additives on children's health. However, some food industry representatives have expressed apprehension about the financial and logistical challenges of compliance.