

An Open Letter to the Food Allergy Community  
From Bob Parker, President & CEO, National Peanut Board

Dear Members of the Food Allergy Community,

I've recently received a number of comments from many of you in the food allergy community criticizing the ad the National Peanut Board placed in USA Today on July 31 which addressed Southwest Airlines' decision to stop serving peanuts on flights. We deeply regret the tone of the ad, which was insensitive and offensive to many. For that, I apologize. Our attempt to show displeasure with an airline's decision reached far beyond to people who must deal with this life-threatening condition every day.

When I say we care deeply about those with food allergies, I say this as both president & CEO of NPB, and as the grandfather of a child who is allergic to nuts. He was diagnosed with peanut and nut allergies more than three years ago. I have walked in your shoes and experienced firsthand the fear when someone you love more than life itself has a severe allergic reaction. For both personal and professional reasons, I am dedicated to finding solutions to food allergies.

The National Peanut Board is completely funded by America's 7,000 peanut farming families. Our farmers take great pride in producing a wholesome, nutritious food, and wish for no one to be harmed by peanuts. More than 15 years ago, our Board decided that if we are part of the problem, we should be part of the solution. From that time, we have supported the search for prevention, diagnosis and treatment for peanut and food allergies, investing more than \$25.3 million in research, outreach and education.

We have also worked hard during the past five years to build relationships with the food allergy community and advocacy organizations like FARE and FAACT, and value them tremendously. I regret not vetting the ad with these organizations, and with members of our Food Allergy Education Advisory Council. Their counsel would have helped us in the tone and tenor of the ad. It's important to us that we continue our relationships with these organizations to further our common goal of ending food allergies.

As caregivers of a nut-allergic child, and as members of the food allergy community, my family took a hard look at the medical evidence about how to manage his food allergies. Based on this evidence and my own observations, my view on the risk of being in proximity to peanuts and peanut butter differs from that of many people we have heard from recently. What I absolutely know is my grandson has happily and safely thrived in a home that chose not to remove peanuts.

For those who have endured scary experiences with food allergies, you have my sympathy. You also have my commitment, and that of America's 7,000 peanut farmers, to work diligently toward solutions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bob Parker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "B" and "P".

Bob Parker  
President & CEO  
National Peanut Board