

**American Public Health Association
Center for Foodborne Illness Research & Prevention
Center for Science in the Public Interest ~ Consumer Federation of America
Consumers Union ~ Food & Water Watch
Government Accountability Project ~ National Consumers League
STOP Foodborne Illness ~ The Pew Charitable Trusts
Trust for America's Health**

November 3, 2011

The Honorable Herb Kohl
Chairman
Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Kingston
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug Administration
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Ranking Member
Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sam Farr
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug Administration
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kohl, Chairman Kingston, Ranking Member Blunt and Ranking Member Farr:

As you work to finalize the FY 2012 Agriculture Appropriations budget, the undersigned members of the Make Our Food Safe Coalition and the Safe Food Coalition respectfully urge the House to agree to the Senate's number for FY 12 funding for the Food and Drug Administration and the Food Safety and Inspection Service. Without adequate funding for food safety, these agencies will be hampered in their efforts to protect the public health and ensure the safety of our food supply.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), every year about 48 million people (1 in 6 Americans) get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die from foodborne diseases. The total economic impact of foodborne illness to society has been estimated at over \$100 billion annually.

The last few months alone have demonstrated the urgent need for adequate food safety resources and the risks to consumers and the industry of a failure to forcefully address this issue. An ongoing foodborne illness outbreak associated with cantaloupes contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes* has, to date, been linked to 28 deaths, one miscarriage, and 133 illnesses across 26 states. In

addition, in August of this year Cargill Meat Solutions Corporation recalled 36 million pounds of ground turkey contaminated with a multi-drug-resistant strain of *Salmonella* Heidelberg. This contaminated ground turkey has been linked to 129 illnesses across 34 states. Providing critical food safety resources to FDA and USDA is essential to help these agencies prevent such outbreaks from occurring in the future; prevention can in turn save billions of dollars in losses, both to individuals as well as to companies, due to deaths, injuries, product recalls and slumps in the sale of related food products.

In addition, FDA is currently working to implement the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), passed last year by Congress with bipartisan support. The Act directs the FDA to *prevent* foodborne illness before it happens by developing critical new preventive food safety programs, increasing inspection of food facilities, and better assuring the safety of the growing volume of imported food. The evolving nature of science and the increasing complexities of pathogens in our food supply, coupled with the new protections in the law, demonstrate the need for increased financial resources for an agency that has been severely underfunded for decades.

We respectfully request that the House agree to the Senate's number for FY 2012 funding for the FDA and FSIS. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Public Health Association
Center for Foodborne Illness Research & Prevention
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Consumer Federation of America
Consumers Union
Food & Water Watch
Government Accountability Project
National Consumers League
STOP Foodborne Illness (formerly S.T.O.P.--Safe Tables Our Priority)
The Pew Charitable Trusts
Trust for America's Health

CC:

The Honorable Tom Harkin
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
The Honorable Tim Johnson
The Honorable Ben Nelson
The Honorable Mark Pryor
The Honorable Sherrod Brown
The Honorable Daniel Inouye
The Honorable Patty Murray
The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
The Honorable Thad Cochran
The Honorable Mitch McConnell
The Honorable Susan Collins
The Honorable Jerry Moran

The Honorable John Hoeven
The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison
The Honorable Richard Shelby
The Honorable Hal Rogers
The Honorable Norm Dicks
The Honorable Jerry Lewis
The Honorable Bill Young
The Honorable Frank Wolf
The Honorable Tom Latham
The Honorable Robert Aderholt
The Honorable Jo Ann Emerson
The Honorable John Culbertson
The Honorable John Carter
The Honorable Steven LaTourette
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
The Honorable John Olver
The Honorable Ed Pastor
The Honorable David Price
The Honorable Sam Farr
The Honorable Chaka Fattah
The Honorable Adam Schiff