

June 5, 2009

The Honorable Henry Waxman, Chairman
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC, 20515

The Honorable Joe Barton, Ranking Member
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2322A Rayburn house Office Building
Washington, DC, 20515

Dear Chairman Waxman and Ranking Member Barton:

Our organizations support the enactment of effective food safety legislation and efforts to ensure that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has adequate resources.

Recognizing the important public health benefits of improved food safety, Congress has increased food safety spending from \$439 million to \$649 million over the last three years. If Congress enacts the Fiscal Year 2010 request proposed by FDA and the Obama Administration, FDA food safety appropriations would increase to \$783 million. When combined with state efforts, these new federal resources reflect an unprecedented investment in food safety activities.

We are concerned that the draft legislation released this week by Chairman Waxman proposes significant new fees on the food, seafood and farm sectors despite this unprecedented increase in appropriated funding. Like many consumer groups, we are concerned about the inherent conflict of interest created by asking industry to fund government inspections. For precisely this reason, Congress has rejected fees for food safety inspection at the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the past 15 years. We are also concerned with other provisions of the draft that increase the cost of food without improving the safety of our food system.

Our organizations support efforts to continually improve the safety of America's food supplies and urge Congress to make the prevention of contamination the foundation of the nation's food safety strategies. We look forward to working with you to develop effective food safety legislation.

Sincerely,

American Bakers Association
American Beverage Association
American Frozen Food Institute
American Spice Trade Association
Flavor and Extract Manufacturers Association of the US
International Association of Color Manufacturers
International Bottled Water Association
International Dairy Foods Association
International Foodservice Distributors Association

National Association of Manufacturers
National Coffee Association of U.S.A
National Fisheries Institute
National Milk Producers Federation
National Confectioners Association
National Council of Chain Restaurants
National Restaurant Association
North American Millers' Association
Organic Trade Association
Produce Marketing Association
Salt Institute
Snack Food Association
United Fresh Produce Association
US Chamber of Commerce