

**American Federation of Government Employees  
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  
United Food & Commercial Workers Int’l Union**

May 20, 2011

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Congresswoman DeLauro:

The undersigned groups are writing in support of your proposal to establish a science-based panel to analyze the food safety system at USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service and develop recommendations on how to modernize it. We appreciate your leadership on this proposal which you developed after discussion with consumer groups and trade unions as well as representatives of the meat and poultry industry.

Your proposal is a responsible, deliberate and science-based approach to determine ways to modernize the FSIS approach to meat and poultry safety and reduce the risk that consumers will contract a foodborne illness from these products. Just last month, a study from the University of Florida identified the top ten food/pathogen combinations with the greatest burden on public health. Diseases contracted from consuming meat and poultry products occupied four of the top five positions on that list, indicating the need to do more to improve the safety of these products. Your proposal will begin a science-based process that will involve all stakeholders in the effort to protect the public health.

We look forward to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

American Federation of Government Employees

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)

United Food & Commercial Workers International Union