

SAFE FOOD COALITION

November 30, 2012

President Barack Obama The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

As you begin your second term in office, we know that numerous challenges face you and the nation. We write to urge you to take immediate steps to address one of these challenges – helping to create a safer food supply by releasing the first four proposed rules under the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that one in six Americans (48 million people) suffer from a foodborne illness each year, resulting in 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths. Consumers continue to experience serious foodborne-illness outbreaks including Salmonella-contaminated peanut butter, cantaloupes contaminated with Listeria, and an ongoing outbreak linked to ricotta salata cheese contaminated with Listeria. These incidents underscore the need for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to put in place, as soon as possible, protections to help prevent these types of incidents from occurring. Such protections are included in FSMA, which you signed into law in 2011 after it was passed by Congress with bipartisan, consumer, and industry support.

The Office of Management and Budget has been reviewing for nearly a year preventive proposals from FDA to improve produce safety, require preventive controls for food and animal feed, and improve import safety. On behalf of those whose lives have been directly impacted by foodborne illness and others who may be unfortunately impacted in the future, as well as for all of the consumer, public health and victim organizations that worked tirelessly to get FSMA enacted, we are writing to respectfully ask you to release these long-delayed proposals so that the promise of this landmark law can become a reality.

Sincerely,

Family & Friends of Kevin Kowalcyk, deceased, E. coli O157:H7 illness, source unknown

Family & Friends of Ruby Trautz, deceased, E. coli O157:H7 2006 spinach outbreak

Family & Friends of Ashley Armstrong, survived E. coli O157:H7 2006 spinach outbreak

Family & Friends of Matthew Larimer, survived E. coli O157:H7 illness, source unknown

Center for Foodborne Illness Research & Prevention

Center for Science in the Public Interest

Consumer Federation of America

Consumers Union

Food and Water Watch

Government Accountability Project

National Consumers League

STOP Foodborne Illness

The Pew Charitable Trusts

Trust for America's Health

United Food and Commercial Workers

U.S. Public Interest Research Group