

February 4, 2015

The Honorable Harold Rogers,
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
The Capitol, Room H-305
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Thad Cochran,
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Capitol, Room S-128
Washington, DC 20514

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey,
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations,
Minority
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski,
Vice Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Appropriations,
Minority
The Capitol, Room S-146A
Washington, DC 20514

Dear Chairmen Rogers and Cochran, Ranking Member Lowey and Vice Chairwoman Mikulski:

As organizations committed to addressing the critical challenge of improving food safety and protecting the public's health, we strongly support the call for additional funding needed to fully implement the regulatory and oversight activities conducted by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in support of a safer food supply. In particular, we are encouraged by the request for an additional \$109.5 million in new budget authority (BA) for FSMA implementation in the President's FY2016 budget.

Foodborne illness remains a major public health priority. According to estimates from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 48 million foodborne illnesses, 128,000 hospitalizations, and as many as 3,000 deaths nationwide every year occur as a result of foodborne pathogens. These highly preventable illnesses cost us billions in avoidable health system-related impacts and result in unnecessary pain and suffering experienced by many Americans.

Congress enacted the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) to modernize the regulatory systems and practices that protect our food supply. By shifting the focus to *preventing* food safety problems before they make people sick and expanding oversight of food imports, we can avoid outbreaks that sicken or kill.

Additional funding provided by your committees since FSMA's enactment has begun to make a difference as FDA continues to finalize the rules and build the systems it needs to implement the law, but much more work remains to be done before our food supply is truly safe. As you undertake your work on agriculture appropriations for Fiscal Year 2016, we strongly urge you to meet the President's request for additional resources for FDA food safety funding to continue FSMA implementation in the year ahead and to robustly fund this vital national priority.

We thank you for your leadership and for the contributions you have made over the past four years. We welcome your continuing interest in this important public health investment and look forward to your support for FDA food safety in the year ahead.

Sincerely yours,

American Public Health Association

Center for Foodborne Illness Research & Prevention

Center for Science in the Public Interest

Consumer Federation of America

Consumers Union

National Consumers League

The Pew Charitable Trusts

STOP Foodborne Illness

Trust for America's Health

Government Accountability Project