

October 22, 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 protecting the public's health, we would like to draw your attention to the critical need for additional funding for Fiscal Year 2016 to fully implement the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), which strengthens and modernizes the regulatory, administrative, and information-technology systems that ensure the safety of our food supply.

Foodborne illness remains a major public health threat. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that contaminated food causes 48 million foodborne illnesses, 128,000 hospitalizations, and as many as 3,000 deaths nationwide every year. These preventable illnesses cost Americans an estimated \$70 billion each year.

In 2011, Congress wisely enacted FSMA, which fundamentally changes the FDA's approach to food safety. Rather than reacting after people become sick, the agency is now able to focus on *preventing* food safety problems. The law also directs FDA to create a comprehensive food import oversight system which, for the first time, makes importers responsible for the safety of the food products they bring into the United States.

FDA's efforts to modernize its regulatory system and workforce to meet this public health challenge begin this year in earnest with the finalization of the major implementing rules that govern FSMA's scope and impact. We are encouraged that the Appropriations Committees have already allocated considerable additional resources for FDA food safety and FSMA implementation. Unfortunately, FDA still needs significantly more funding for FY2016 in order to retrain its inspection workforce, invest in new IT infrastructure, and assist growers and other regulated parties with training and technical assistance to meet the new standards. As you complete your efforts to conclude a final budget agreement for FY2016, we strongly urge you to meet the FDA's full request for \$109.5 million for food safety modernization.

We thank you for your leadership and your support for FSMA implementation since the law's enactment and encourage your ongoing interest in further reducing preventable foodborne illnesses through this important public health investment.

Sincerely yours,