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ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20515-6115

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June 21, 2007

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Ms. Lisa Shames
Acting Director
Natural Resources and Environment
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street N.W., Room 2T23A
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Ms. Shames:

Thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations on Tuesday, April 24, 2007, at the hearing entitled "Diminished Capacity: Can the FDA Assure the Safety and Security of the Nation's Food Supply?" We appreciate the time and effort you gave as a witness before the Subcommittee.

Under the Rules of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the hearing record remains open to permit Members to submit additional questions to the witnesses. Attached are questions directed to you from certain Members of the Committee. In preparing your answers to these questions, please address your response to the Member who has submitted the question(s) and include the text of the Member's question along with your response.

To facilitate the printing of the hearing record, your responses to these questions should be received no later than the close of business **Friday, July 6, 2007**. Your written responses should be delivered to **316 Ford House Office Building** and faxed to **202-225-5288** to the attention of Kyle Chapman, Legislative Clerk. An electronic version of your response should also be sent by e-mail to Mr. Kyle Chapman at kyle.chapman@mail.house.gov in a single Word formatted document.

Ms. Lisa Shames
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Thank you for your prompt attention to this request. If you need additional information or have other questions, please contact Kyle Chapman at (202) 226-2424.

Sincerely,



JOHN D. DINGELL
CHAIRMAN

Attachment

cc: The Honorable Joe Barton, Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce

The Honorable Bart Stupak, Chairman
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

The Honorable Ed Whitfield, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

The Honorable Ed Whitfield

The tainted food supply is of utmost concern to this committee and the FDA's role in protecting the American public from further occurrences. Specifically, the intentional "spiking" of wheat gluten with melamine in Chinese imports concerns me greatly. Furthermore, the news that melamine has been traced to pork and may now be in the human food chain indicates that this is now truly a matter of the public's health and safety. I fear for the health and safety of my constituents.

Specifically, my State is famous for and proud to be the largest catfish producing State. Recently, Chinese imports of basa and other catfish-like products have increased exponentially. For sometime the catfish producers in my State and others along with Government officials have been concerned about the integrity of these imported Asian catfish-like species. In fact, the USFA has refused upwards of 49 shipments of Chinese farmed basa this past year alone due to the presence of potentially banned and dangerous chemicals and antibiotics found in these shipments. With the latest pet food scare and tainted pork in California found to contain traces of melamine, there is now hard evidence that the wheat gluten imported from China used in pet food and also used in animal feed threatens the safety of the American people.

Do you believe that we currently have in place the controls necessary to protect the American people from Asian fish that may contain melamine that was intentionally blended into the wheat gluten or other potentially banned and dangerous chemicals?

In an effort to protect the public, do you believe we have an obligation to impose a temporary ban on all imported fish from China until we can assure the American people that China is meeting the standards the American people expect and deserve?