

Philadelphia Regional Port Authority

Executive Director

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July 11, 2005

02-019P
02-019P-8
James T. McDermott Jr.

Ms. Sally White
Director
International Equivalence Staff
Office of International Affairs
300 12th Street, SW.
Room 102 Cotton Annex
Washington, DC 20250

RE: Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), Docket No. 02-019P, Addition of Chile to the list of Countries Eligible to Export Meat and Meat Products to the United States, 70 Fed. Reg. 24485

Dear Ms. White:

We are writing in full support of the FSIS proposed rule to add Chile to the list of countries eligible to export meat and meat products to the United States. Now that FSIS has completed reviews of Chile's laws, regulations and other materials that demonstrate its meat inspection system includes requirements equivalent to all provisions of the Federal Meat Inspection Act and its implementing regulations, we believe it is imperative to finalize the rule as soon as possible.

The Port of Philadelphia is a major economic generator for Philadelphia and is a critical component to the economic infrastructure of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Port of Philadelphia is the leading perishables port on the east coast of the United States, and also the largest importer of meat in the eastern United States. We have enjoyed a long and successful trade relationship with Chile (we are the #1 port for Chilean fruit on the US east coast). More imports into the port mean additional jobs in the areas of transportation, warehousing and distribution fostering improvements in the economy in the state. In addition, more ships coming to the port provide greater opportunities for Philadelphia area companies to export.

We agree that listing Chile as eligible to export meat products to the United States would expand international markets and enhance the free flow of trade between

Chile and the United States consistent with the U.S.-Chile Free Trade Agreement. Further, we must avoid using technical barriers to unfairly restrict trade. With access to foreign markets increasingly critical to American agriculture, it is more important than ever that countries base trade decisions on sound science. By moving to eliminate the existing trade barrier for Chilean red meat, FSIS is setting a strong example to be used in persuading other countries to remove their unnecessary trade restrictions.

We urge FSIS to act on the conclusions of Docket No. 02-019P upon close of the July 11, 2005 comment period and publish a final rule as quickly as possible. To do so is good science policy, good trade policy, and good economic policy.

Sincerely,



James T. McDermott, Jr.
Executive Director