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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 2, 2006

The Honorable Mike Johanns  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
200-A Whitten Building  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Johanns:

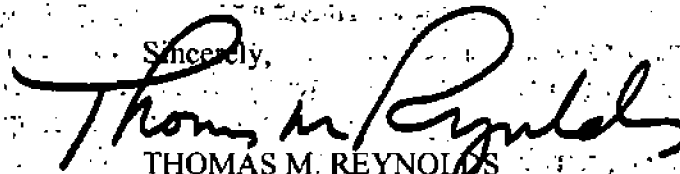
I am writing to express my concern over the Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service's (FSIS) proposed rule to allow China to export processed poultry to the United States. While I understand that the proposal would continue the ban on live poultry imports, I do not believe that the proper justification exists for allowing China to process poultry slaughtered in the United States or other countries from which the United States allows imports.

Just this morning, it was reported that three people in Hong Kong, who came into contact with an avian flu-infected chicken smuggled in from China, were under quarantine in a hospital. Thankfully, initial tests of these individuals were negative. However, I think it accurately highlights the growing avian flu problem that exists specifically in China. I am not convinced that adequate safety measures are in place to guarantee that poultry sent to China for processing under the proposed rule would be returned to the United States in a manner safe for consumption. The head of the World Health Organization concluded after the recent death of an Iraqi girl how little is actually known about the disease and how it spreads.

Given the seriousness of a potential avian flu outbreak in the United States and following the announcement of a national strategy to protect against the disease, I recently held two summits in my Congressional District. These forums brought together local leaders with public health professionals and researchers to discuss the ways in which every level of government needs to address pandemic influenza through prevention, protection and preparation.

It is troubling to me that we would invite unnecessary and potentially massive safety risks into the United States. The security of our food supply and the health and well being of American citizens far outweighs whatever potential benefit perceived by your Department in issuing this proposed rule. I therefore respectfully request that you reconsider this proposal and avoid enacting any rules that allow processed poultry imports from China.

Sincerely,



THOMAS M. REYNOLDS  
Member of Congress



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