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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 6, 2007

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GREGG A. ROTHSCHILD, CHIEF COUNSEL

Richard A. Raymond, M.D.  
Under Secretary for Food Safety  
Food Safety and Inspection Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Dr. Raymond:

Under Rules X and XI of the Rules of the United States House of Representatives, the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations are currently investigating the safety of the Nation's food supply. While the initial focus of the investigation has been on the adequacy of the efforts of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to protect the Nation's food supply, a food safety matter of deep concern involving the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has recently been brought to our attention. We are writing to request your assistance in providing the Committee with more information regarding this matter

On Sunday, May 20, 2007, *The Washington Post* ran an article entitled, "Tainted Chinese Imports Common." This article raised several concerns about the safety of food imports from China. According to the article, USDA has a rule that allows China to export chickens to the United States if the chickens were grown and slaughtered in North America and then processed in China. The *Post* article reports that this rule was promulgated last year "under high-level pressure from China" after quickly passing through multiple levels of reviews. Additionally, according to the article, you have stated that a rule "is in the works" to allow China to export its own homegrown birds to the United States. You further stated "that permission for China to sell poultry is moving ahead because recent USDA audits found China's poultry slaughterhouses to be equivalent to those here." The *Post* article, however, reports that others who have seen the audits disagree with this assertion. One advocacy group called USDA's findings "unbelievable."

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In order to assist the Committee with its investigation of the safety of the Nation's food supply, we request that you provide the Committee with the following information:

1. Any documents or communications relating to the decision to allow China to export chickens to the United States that were grown and slaughtered in North America and then processed in China;
2. Any documents or communications relating to the proposed rule that would allow China to export its own homegrown birds to the United States; and
3. Any documents or communications relating to the audits of Chinese poultry slaughterhouses.

Please note, for the purpose of responding to the above request, the terms "documents," "communications," and "relating" should be interpreted in accordance with the attachment to this letter. After reviewing the documents, we may request additional documents and/or staff interviews with USDA/Food Safety Inspection Service personnel.

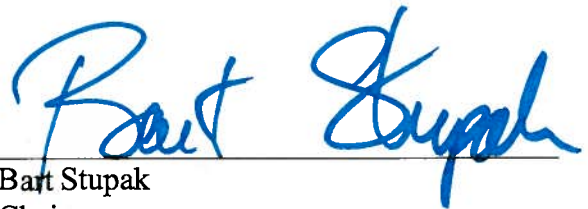
We ask that you supply all requested documents by no later than the close of business two weeks from the date of this letter.

If you have any questions relating to this request, please contact us or have your staff contact Kevin Barstow or David Nelson with the Committee on Energy and Commerce staff at (202) 226-2424.

Sincerely,



John D. Dingell  
Chairman



Bart Stupak  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Attachment

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

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

## ATTACHMENT

1. The term "records" is to be construed in the broadest sense and shall mean any written or graphic material, however produced or reproduced, of any kind or description, consisting of the original and any non-identical copy (whether different from the original because of notes made on or attached to such copy or otherwise) and drafts and both sides thereof, whether printed or recorded electronically or magnetically or stored in any type of data bank, including, but not limited to, the following: correspondence, memoranda, records, summaries of personal conversations or interviews, minutes or records of meetings or conferences, opinions or reports of consultants, projections, statistical statements, drafts, contracts, agreements, purchase orders, invoices, confirmations, telegraphs, telexes, agendas, books, notes, pamphlets, periodicals, reports, studies, evaluations, opinions, logs, diaries, desk calendars, appointment books, tape recordings, video recordings, e-mails, voice mails, computer tapes, or other computer stored matter, magnetic tapes, microfilm, microfiche, punch cards, all other records kept by electronic, photographic, or mechanical means, charts, photographs, notebooks, drawings, plans, inter-office communications, intra-office and intra-departmental communications, transcripts, checks and canceled checks, bank statements, ledgers, books, records or statements of accounts, and papers and things similar to any of the foregoing, however denominated.
2. The terms "relating," or "relate" as to any given subject means anything that constitutes, contains, embodies, identifies, deals with, or is in any manner whatsoever pertinent to that subject, including but not limited to records concerning the preparation of other records.