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Congress of the United States
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December 7, 2000

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The Honorable Jane E. Henney, Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, Maryland 20587

Dear Commissioner Henney:


I am writing with regard to possible FDA action regarding the mercury content in seafood.

I share your interest in protecting America's consumers from dangerous chemicals -- like methyl mercury in seafood -- which could threaten their health. I also understand the complexity of many of the FDA's undertakings -- making important decisions involving difficult trade-offs with imperfect information.

It is my understanding that the FDA may soon issue an advisory to the public on the mercury-related risks of eating seafood. I strongly support such efforts to protect the public's health, but I have two concerns about such an action. The first concern deals with the timing of such an announcement. It is my understanding that the University of Rochester is currently finishing up a study of seafood consumption in the Seychelles Islands -- and that this study could help the FDA make a much more informed decision about such an advisory. I would urge the FDA to delay issuing such an advisory until it can review the University of Rochester study. My second concern deals with the unintended adverse affects that such an advisory could have. As you well know, there are many positive health effects associated with a diet that includes significant servings of seafood. I would urge the FDA to ensure that any decision to issue such an advisory carefully weigh the risks of seafood consumption with the many benefits of seafood consumption and the effect that such advisories could have on seafood consumption in this country. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

With all best wishes, I am

Sincerely,


William J. Coyne
Member of Congress

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