

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 13, 2016

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
H-232 U.S. Capitol Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
H-204 U.S. Capitol Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Majority Leader
H-107 U.S. Capitol Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Minority Whip
H-148 U.S. Capitol Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Democratic Leader Pelosi:

On May 25, 2016, the Senate voted 55 to 43 in favor of S.J. Res. 28, a bipartisan joint resolution of disapproval under the procedures of the Congressional Review Act. This joint resolution would disapprove of the rule creating the U.S. Department of Agriculture catfish program and return inspection of catfish back to the Food and Drug Administration, which currently regulates all other species of seafood. The House should be afforded the opportunity for a floor vote on this important joint resolution before the August work period.

As a reminder, the USDA catfish program was added by the Senate to the 2008 Farm Bill conference report. It was in neither the House bill nor the Senate bill and was never subject to a hearing, debate or a vote before it appeared in the 2008 conference report. This language unnecessarily shifts catfish inspection from the FDA to the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). Any facility that processes catfish and any other species of fish is subject to duplicative regulation: USDA for catfish and FDA for all other species. We believe the best use of taxpayers' dollars is to have one regulator for seafood by returning the oversight of catfish to the FDA.

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) has 10 times stated that this program is "duplicative" and at "high risk" for fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement. GAO concludes that the USDA catfish program "would result in duplication of federal programs and cost taxpayers millions of dollars annually without enhancing the safety of catfish intended for human consumption." (GAO-13-283) This is not a food safety issue. USDA acknowledges that catfish, regardless of where it comes from, is considered a "low risk food." Similarly, the GAO found no food safety data supporting the transfer of inspection to the USDA. President Obama agrees and has proposed to eliminate the USDA catfish program in previous budgets.

As you know, the House Committee on Agriculture voted to repeal this program last Congress during consideration of the Farm Bill by a bipartisan vote of 31 yeas to 15 nays, and the full House adopted the repeal of the USDA catfish program under the open rule

consideration of the Farm Bill. It is imperative that regular order and common sense prevail, and we respectfully request that this joint resolution be brought to the floor for immediate consideration.

Sincerely,



Vicky Hartzler
Member of Congress



Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress



Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress



Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress



Peter J. Roskam
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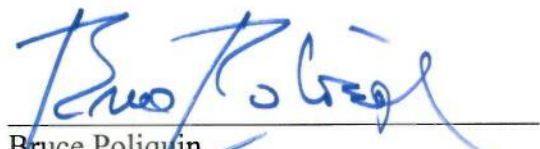
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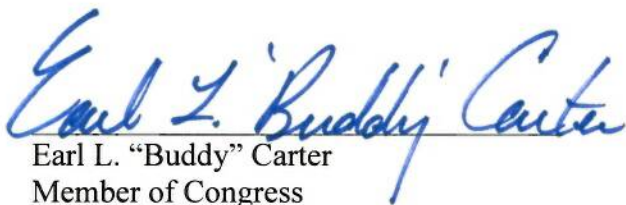
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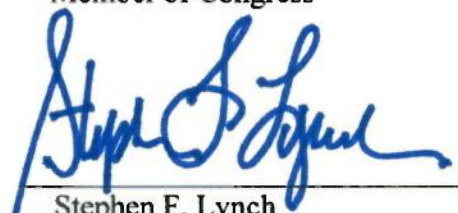
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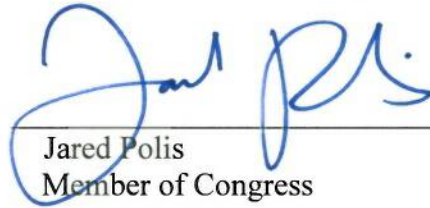
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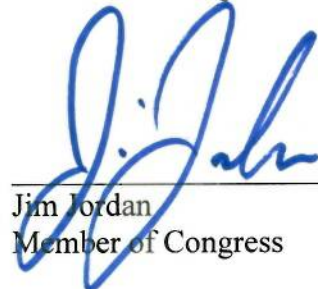
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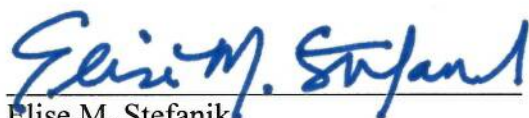
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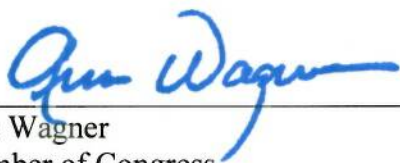
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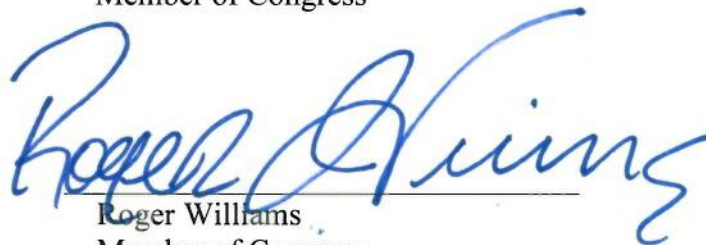
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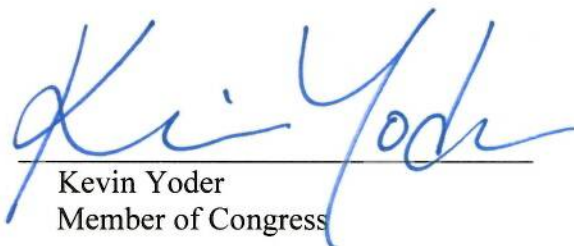
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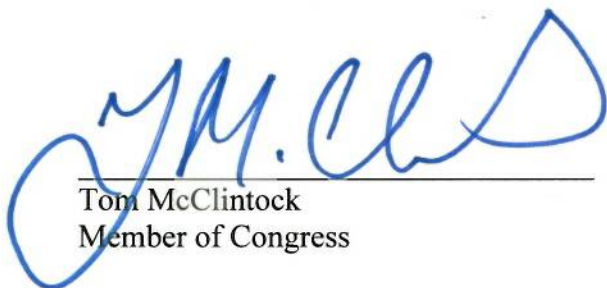
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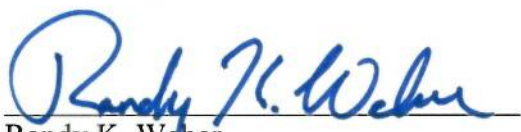
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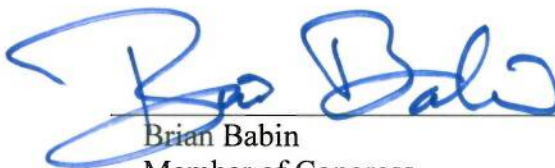
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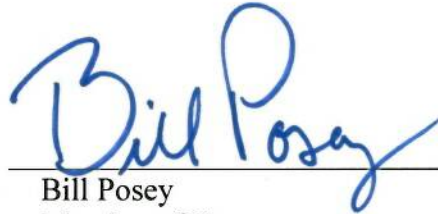
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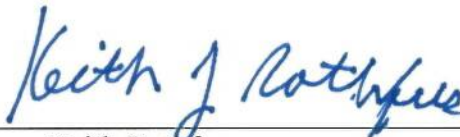
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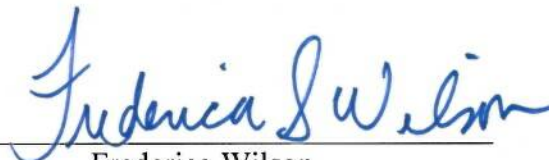
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