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. Roskan  
Member of Congress

Corrine Brown  
Member of Congress

Rodney Davis  
Member of Congress

Richard M. Nolan  
Member of Congress

Robert J. Dold  
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Ann M. Kuster  
Member of Congress

Bruce Poliquin  
Member of Congress

Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress
Dan Benishek  
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

Gus Bilirakis  
Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici  
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Mike Bishop  
Member of Congress

Cheri Bustos  
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Marsha Blackburn  
Member of Congress

Tony Cardenas  
Member of Congress

Rod Blum  
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David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress

Dave Brat  
Member of Congress

Katherine M. Clark  
Member of Congress

Jim Bridenstine  
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress
Ron DeSantis
Member of Congress

Denny Heck
Member of Congress

Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress

Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress

Jeff Duncan
Member of Congress

William R. Keating
Member of Congress

Renee L. Ellmers
Member of Congress

Derek Kilmer
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Blake Farenthold
Member of Congress

Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress

J. Randy Forbes
Member of Congress

James R. Langevin
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Trent Franks
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress
Andy Harris
Member of Congress

Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress

Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress

Jared Polis
Member of Congress

Richard Hudson
Member of Congress

Robert "Bobby" C. Scott
Member of Congress

Robert Hurt
Member of Congress

Kyrsten Sinema
Member of Congress

David W. Jolly
Member of Congress

Adam Smith
Member of Congress

Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress

Niki Tsongas
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Jim Jordan
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Filemon Vela
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Mike Pompeo
Member of Congress

Dave Reichert
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Reid J. Ribble
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E. Scott Rigell
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David P. Roe
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Dennis A. Ross
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Edward E. Royce
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Steve Russell
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Matt Salmon
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Mark Sanford
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David Schweikert
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Michael K. Simpson
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Adrian Smith
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John Ratcliffe
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Joseph R. Pitts
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Greg Walden
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Tom McClintock
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Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.
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Randy K. Weber
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Brian Babin
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Mia Love
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Bill Foster
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Jeff Hensarling
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Adam B. Schiff
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Chris Stewart
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Brett Guthrie  
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Crescent Hardy  
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Steve Stivers  
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Sean Duffy  
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Randy Hultgren  
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Charles W. Dent  
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Ryan A. Costello  
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Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress

Paul Tonko  
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Ed Whitfield  
Member of Congress