

News From Congressman John D. Dingell
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House Passes Dingell's Historic Food Safety Legislation

*The First Major Overhaul of Our Food Safety System In 70 Years --
To Protect Our Children and Families from Contaminated Food*

Washington, DC - Today, the House passed the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act, as part of the FY 2011 Continuing Resolution by a vote of 212-206. This landmark reform, authored and fought for by John Dingell, overhauls the nation's food safety system, improving our capacity to prevent food safety problems and detect and respond to food-borne illness outbreaks. With Congressman Dingell's food safety legislation in place, significant new authority would be provided to the Food and Drug Administration, putting a new focus on prevention by requiring food producers to use scientific techniques to prevent contaminated food, accelerating the government's response to outbreaks, and setting the first safety standards for imported food.

The bill would provide the FDA with more resources and direction to:

- Issue and require manufacturers to meet strong, enforceable standards that will ensure the safety of various types of food.
- Establish a food trace back system, so that public health officials can more rapidly determine the sources of food borne disease outbreaks.
- Thoroughly inspect all food facilities more frequently.
- Set better inspection standards for imported foods.
- Require and conduct more rapid response recalls of unsafe food and the authority to access facility records.

"The bill is a giant leap forward towards ensuring the safety of the American food supply," said Dingell. I look forward to determining what the appropriate next steps should be to provide the greatest protections for American's consumers and to ensure FDA has the resources to fulfill their new responsibilities. It is imperative that we immediately begin working on ensuring a food registration fee becomes law. I call on industry, consumer groups and House Republicans and Democrats who supported them the first time around to continue being a partner in this fight."

On June 30, 2009, the House passed *H.R. 2749*, the Food Safety Enhancement Act. It was a monumental piece of bipartisan legislation that worked to grant FDA the authorities and resources needed to effectively oversee an increasingly global food marketplace. For over the past 5 years, Congressman Dingell has been alarmed by the issues of melamine in infant formula, tainted peppers from Mexico, harmful seafood from China, and E. coli in spinach. "Each year, 76 million people contract a food borne illness in the United States and about 5,000 die," said Dingell. "The Food and

Drug Administration—the Agency responsible for regulating about 80% of the food supply—has been expected to adequately protect American consumers with outdated authorities and woefully inadequate funding.”

On November 30th, the Senate passed the bill by a bipartisan vote, but the Senate-passed bill violates the clause in the Constitution that requires revenue-raising bills to originate in the House. Today the House passed the bill as part of the Continuing Resolution (CR) with minor technical changes addressing this issue, and will now send it back over to the Senate. “Our food safety overhaul would make overdue improvements to FDA’s existing authorities, authorities which have not been updated since 1938. I commend my colleagues for their hard work over the past two years on this critical issue,” said Dingell.

The Continuing Resolution Act freezes Fiscal Year 2011 discretionary appropriations at the FY 2010 level and adjusts funding between programs and accounts to deal with current demands to keep important government programs intact. The CR includes \$513 billion for the Department of Defense, \$75.2 billion for military construction and veterans affairs, and \$501.4 billion for all other appropriations. Also within this funding, HHS’s Health Care Fraud and Abuse Control program and the Office of Inspector General can continue their vigorous oversight and investigation work to prevent and respond to waste, fraud and abuse in Medicare and Medicaid. Further, the CR provides more resources to the Pell Grant program to prevent a funding shortfall, as well as funding to provide additional resources to help State Unemployment Insurance offices to assist in handling their increased caseloads.

“Medicare and Medicaid fraud abuse programs, funding the Pell Grant program, and assisting working families struggling to get by in need of unemployment benefits are all invaluable programs that I strongly advocate for on behalf of my constituents in Southeast Michigan,” said Dingell. “We must keep these programs fully-funded to keep Michigan moving forward.”

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