

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 926

Recognizing the importance of food, product safety, and U.S. trade policy.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 16, 2008

Ms. SUTTON submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the importance of food, product safety, and U.S. trade policy.

Whereas the United States imports nearly \$65,000,000,000 in food products annually, an amount nearly double the value imported when the North American Free Trade Agreement (“NAFTA”) went into effect;

Whereas the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (“FDA”) estimates it will only inspect 0.6 percent of the food it regulates at the border in 2007;

Whereas the FDA inspected approximately 8 percent of imported food in 1992, prior to the enactment of NAFTA;

Whereas imports of seafood increased by 65 percent in the decade following the enactment of NAFTA;

Whereas today over 80 percent of seafood consumed by Americans is imported;

Whereas the FDA was only able to inspect 1.93 percent of all seafood imports in 2006, despite a 78 percent increase of Vibrio, a diarrheal disease associated with seafood, following the enactment of NAFTA between 1996 and 2006;

Whereas the U.S. Department of Agriculture (“USDA”) has only inspected 11 percent of beef, pork, and chicken imported into the United States, despite the continuing threat of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or mad cow disease, and other health issues;

Whereas many Americans have been affected by major food contamination or health problems in the United States, including recalls of spinach for Salmonella and E. coli contamination, the recall of tainted pet food from China that sickened and killed an estimated 39,000 pets, and the ban of Canadian cattle after cows tested positive for mad cow disease;

Whereas the United States allows food to be imported through 360 ports, although only 13 cities have an FDA laboratory;

Whereas trade deals force the United States to accept food imports that do not meet safety standards for food produced in the United States as long as the products meet a vague “equivalent” standard;

Whereas vigorous inspections of imported food and products by Federal officials is viewed as an impediment to trade under many agreements and therefore are not carried out in an effective and efficient manner;

Whereas the overall value of imported products has increased dramatically during the NAFTA era, including an increase of 67 percent between 2000 and 2006;

Whereas 80 percent of all toys sold in the United States today are imported from China;

Whereas the number of Chinese-made products being recalled in the United States has doubled in the past 5 years;

Whereas Chinese-made products now account for 60 percent of all consumer product recalls; and

Whereas the Consumer Product Safety Commission has half the number of employees it had 3 decades ago, before trade deals allowed unregulated, foreign products to flood our markets: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the United States House of Rep-
2 resentatives—

3 (1) recognizes the causal relationship between
4 so-called “free trade agreements” and the increase
5 of imports;

6 (2) recognizes that adoption of additional trade
7 agreements will likely significantly increase the num-
8 ber of products and food our Nation imports;

9 (3) recognizes that current United States’ trade
10 policies must be improved to adequately ensure the
11 safety of imported food and products;

12 (4) recognizes the link between current United
13 States trade policies and the increase in tainted im-
14 ported food and unsafe products;

1 (5) recognizes that the percentage of food im-
2 ports currently inspected by the United States is in-
3 adequate and poses a risk to American families;

4 (6) recognizes the need to ensure the safety of
5 imported food before additional trade agreements
6 are ratified;

7 (7) encourages the USDA, FDA, and other
8 Federal agencies charged with keeping imported
9 food safe to step up inspections of imported food;
10 and

11 (8) encourages greater vigilance by Federal
12 agencies in ensuring imported products and food are
13 safe.

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