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May 21, 2007

The Honorable George Bush
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Many of our states recently have suffered the consequences of animal feed tainted with melamine and melamine related compounds imported from China. Contaminated products were traced by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to feed that was delivered to 38 Indiana poultry operations. Additionally, thousands of American pets are sick or dying because China exported poisoned pet food ingredients.

While scientists from five federal agencies concluded last week that there is very low risk to human health from consuming meat from chicken fed contaminated feed, it heightens how vulnerable the United States agriculture and food systems are to potentially poisonous agents that may be intentionally delivered to American citizens. We must treat this as a wake-up call to take more aggressive steps to guard against contamination of the human food supply.

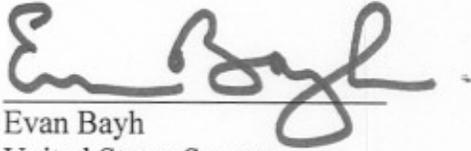
Recognizing the catastrophic health and economic effects a successful agroterrorism attack could have on the United States agriculture and food system, Homeland Security Presidential Directive-9 (HSPD-9) was issued on February 3, 2004. The Secretaries of Agriculture, Health and Human Services, and Homeland Security were to expand development of common screening and inspection procedures for agriculture and food items entering the United States and to maximize effective domestic inspection activities for food items within the United States. I urge your administration to take aggressive action to coordinate the work of these multiple agencies to protect the United States agriculture and food industries to insure that imports from China and other countries are free of illegal and dangerous substances and contaminants.

In addition, the FDA is charged with ensuring the safety of what American families consume, and far more must be done at the federal level to honor this responsibility and toughen up our inspections regimen. The Food and Drug Administration developed a comprehensive Import Strategic Plan several years ago to guard against agents and toxins posing a serious threat to public health, animals, plants, and animal and plant products. To date, FDA's Import Strategic Plan has not been released.

I write to respectfully request that you report on the implementation of the goals of HSPD-9, particularly the development of common screening and inspection procedures for agriculture and food items entering the United States, and that you release the FDA's Import Strategic Plan at this time.

Thank you for your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Evan Bayh". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Evan Bayh
United States Senator