



FDA's Food Safety Program Needs Sufficient Funds to Protect Both Public Health and the Economic Health of the Food Industry

The funding level proposed for FY 2012 will enable the agency to make substantial progress in implementing the new food safety law.

- **The President's FY 2012 budget includes:**
 - \$183 million to implement the new food safety law
 - \$356 million for all of FDA's food work (both safety and nutrition)
 - \$4.3 billion for all of FDA, which includes fees for other programs within FDA.
- **The Continuing Resolution (CR) to fund the remainder of FY2011 provides FDA's food program with an additional \$53 million, a down payment on protecting the nation's food supply that demonstrates bipartisan Congressional support for ensuring food safety.**

Recent increases in FDA's food safety funding, including what is proposed by the President for FY2012, will begin to rebuild an agency that has been chronically underfunded and understaffed.

- **Without additional funding, the agency's food safety staff will be unable to keep up with the skyrocketing volume of food imports.**
 - In a single decade (1998-2007), food imports to the United States doubled.
- **The volume of imported foods continues to grow rapidly. They will overwhelm the agency unless Congress provides the added funds needed to assure these foods are safe. Currently, we import:**
 - 15% of all the food we consume
 - 40% of fresh fruits and vegetables
 - 80% of all seafood.

What the experts are saying about FDA's funding needs:

FDA's "food safety workload has increased in the past decade, while its food safety staff and funding have not kept pace."

- U.S. Government Accountability Office, *FDA's Food Protection Plan Proposes Positive First Steps, But Capacity to Carry Them Out Is Critical*, at page 2 (2008).

FDA lacks the "extensive resources necessary to design and support a comprehensive risk-based food safety management system."

- Institute of Medicine, *Enhancing Food Safety: the Role of the Food and Drug Administration*, at page 5 (2010).

"Without a substantial increase in resources, the Agency is powerless to improve its performance, will fall further behind, and will be unable to meet either the mandates of Congress or the expectations of the American public. This will damage not only the health of the population of the U.S., but also the health of our economy."

- FDA Science Board, *FDA Science and Mission at Risk*, at page 8 (2007).

Failure to fund the new food safety law will endanger American families.

- According to 2011 estimates by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in six Americans (48 million people) will suffer from a foodborne illness each year, resulting in more than 120,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths.
- The annual health-related costs of foodborne illness are estimated at more than \$100 billion.
- Government data show that there has been little if any progress in lowering foodborne illness rates since 2000, with the progress up to that point likely attributed to USDA preventive control regulations. The new law directs FDA to develop similar, prevention-based regulations for processed foods and produce safety standards for raw fruits and vegetables. These changes should result in further reductions in foodborne illnesses, but only if the agency gets the necessary funds to finalize these measures.
- We need to adequately fund FDA not only to fully implement the new law, but also to enable the agency to address the numerous new challenges it faces. These include detecting emerging strains of dangerous bacteria that are difficult to identify and control and identifying previously unrecognized vehicles for foodborne disease, such as produce items.

Failure to fund the new food safety law will hurt American business because:

- Recalls and outbreaks are likely to increase. Confidence in the safety of U.S.-produced food will decline and both domestic and overseas sales will fall. A single recall can cost a company tens of millions of dollars.
- The law's strong food import provisions will not be implemented. As a result, foreign companies that are willing to cut corners on the food they export to the United States will compete unfairly with U.S. food companies that are protecting the public by following the rules.
- FDA will likely lack the resources to hire additional scientists, experts and scientific contractors. In addition, funding for research that considers the specific circumstances of segments of the food industry will be severely reduced, resulting in less targeted and effective regulations.
- FDA will not be able to hire the number of inspectors necessary to meet the law's foreign and domestic inspection mandates. This shortage will potentially put companies that are complying with the rules at a competitive disadvantage and leave industry members uncertain about their responsibilities until problems occur and people get sick.

Consumer groups and the food industry strongly supported passage of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act. Opinion polls showed overwhelming public support for the law. The Make Our Food Safe Coalition is working with the Grocery Manufacturers Association and its members to support the President's FY2012 request for funding to implement the new food safety law and to support FDA's new approach to food safety oversight.



www.makeourfoodsafety.org

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