

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 22, 2012

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

Thank you for your recent attention to the issue of "finely textured lean beef trimmings" or "pink slime" in our children's school food. While we appreciate your recent statement that schools may "opt out" of purchasing the slurry meant for animal feed, we are writing to urge you to completely end the purchasing of pink slime for school food.

As you know, "pink slime" is a term used for an industrial slurry of beef scraps and connective tissue. This product, produced by two companies in the United States, Cargill Meat Solutions and Beef Products, Inc., is treated with ammonia hydroxide to remove E. coli and Salmonella.

Although fast food restaurants like McDonald's and Burger King have stopped using pink slime in their food, the USDA has not yet made this policy change, and recently authorized the purchase of ground beef containing an additional seven million pounds of pink slime destined to be served in school cafeterias. If these fast food chains won't serve pink slime, why should school cafeterias?

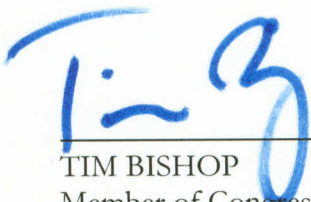
We are also concerned with the consequences of creating an "opt out" or two-tier system for schools. If pink slime laced ground beef is less expensive to make, we are very concerned that lower funded districts will be forced to use it. Creating a two-tiered school lunch program where kids in less affluent communities get served this low-grade slurry is wrong.

We share the concerns of people around the country about this bi-product being fed to our children. We hope you will do everything in your power to eliminate it from the National School Lunch Program.

Sincerely,



CHELLIE PINGREE  
Member of Congress



TIM BISHOP  
Member of Congress



EARL BLUMENAUER  
Member of Congress



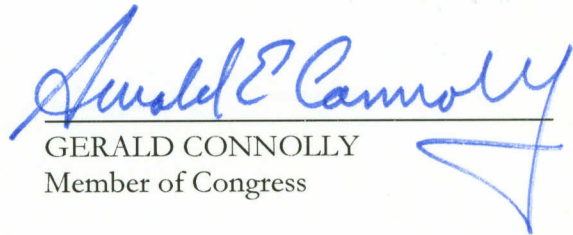
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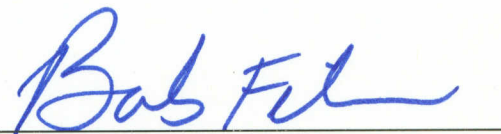
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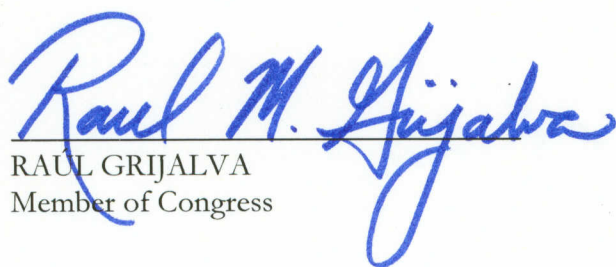
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PETER DEFAZIO  
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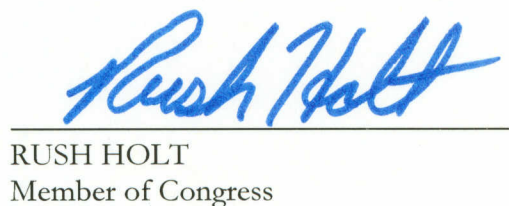


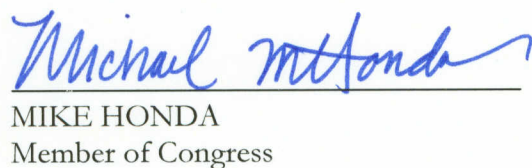
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MARTIN HEINRICH  
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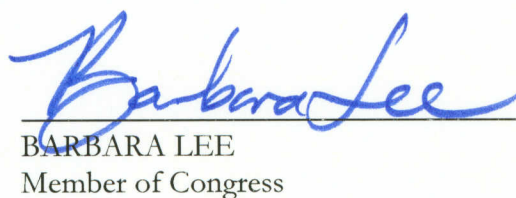
  
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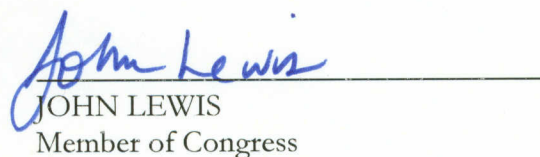
  
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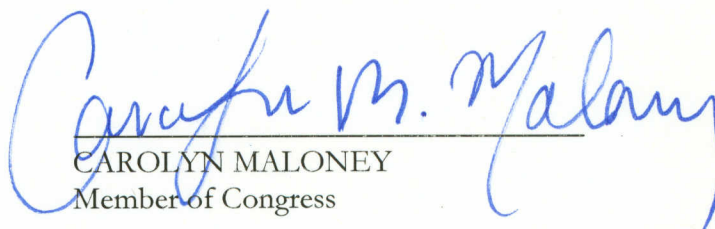
  
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DALE KILDEE  
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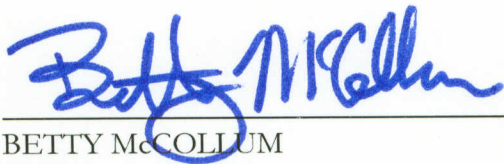
  
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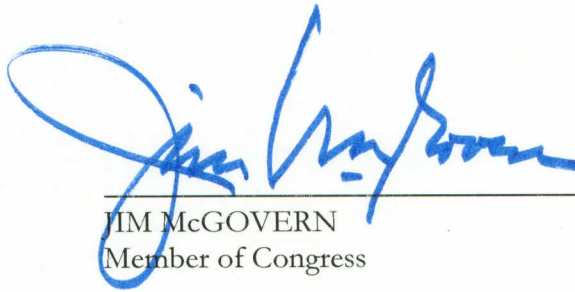
  
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JIM MCGOVERN  
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JERROLD NADLER  
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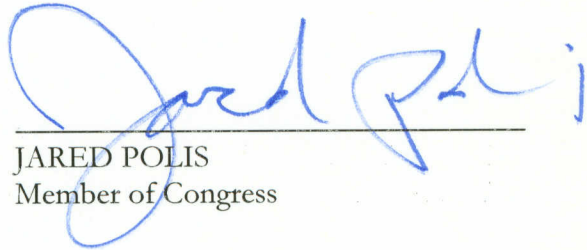
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON  
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GARY PETERS  
Member of Congress



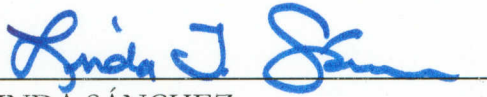
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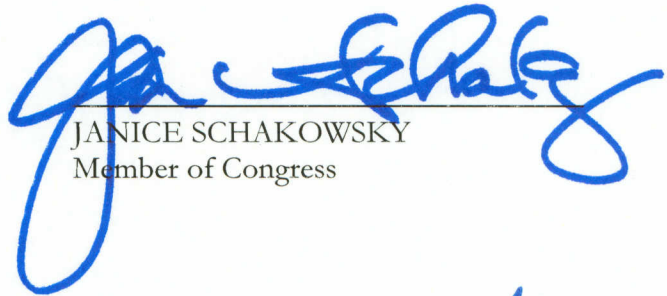
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Member of Congress



LINDA SÁNCHEZ  
Member of Congress



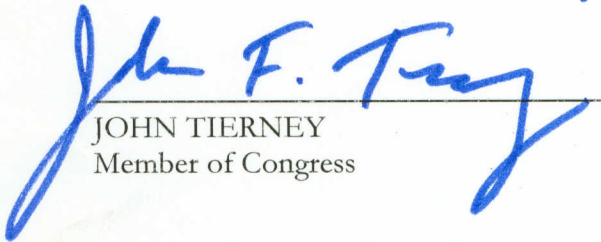
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LOUISE SLAUGHTER  
Member of Congress



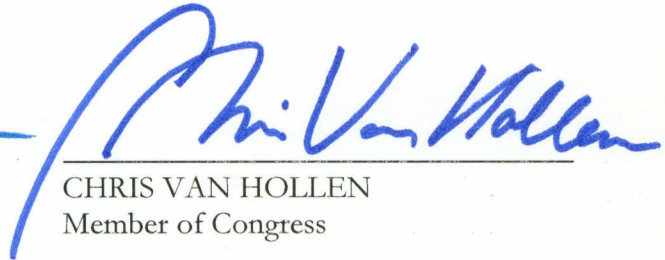
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CHRIS VAN HOLLEN  
Member of Congress