

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

May 28, 2013

Dr. Margaret Hamburg  
Commissioner  
U.S. Food and Drug Administration  
10903 New Hampshire Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20993

Re: Docket Nos. FDA-2011-N-0920 and FDA-2011-N-0921

Dear Commissioner Hamburg:

Thank you for extending the comment period for the proposed Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) rules by 120 days to allow our producers and other stakeholders additional time to review these proposed rules and provide comment. While we appreciate and support the implementation of this law, we write today requesting that you hold a public hearing and listening session in New England during this extended period to take comments from producers about the regional implications of these proposed rules.

New England is home to over 33,000 farms—a number that is growing every year. Agriculture is a robust and vital sector of our New England economy and greatly contributes to our environmental and public health. Rising consumer demand for organic and locally produced farm goods has led to increased economic opportunity, often aided by support from programs administered through the USDA. Substantial public investments have been made to ensure a robust and environmentally sustainable agricultural infrastructure in New England, and parts of the proposed FSMA rules threaten to undermine those investments.

It appears to us that many aspects of the rules were derived from existing practices of large scale farming operations that do not represent the majority of farms or farming practices in New England. The average farm in New England is only 110 acres and fully 65% of our farms have yearly sales totaling under \$10,000. The produce safety and preventive control rules as currently proposed by the FDA threaten to impose substantial regulatory and financial burdens that will impede the growth of these small farms and value-added on-farm enterprises. We urge you to come to New England to hear firsthand from our producers about the potential financial and environmental impact that these proposed rules could have on our unique agricultural sector.

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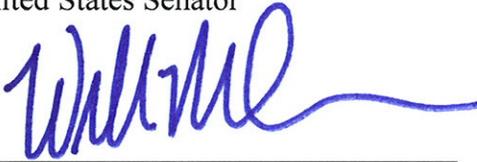
We recognize the FDA's desire to implement these rules expeditiously, but it is imperative that these rules reflect the needs of the many different regions throughout our nation, including New England's growing local and regional food system. We would welcome an opportunity to host the FDA in New England to explore science- and risk-based food safety standards that are appropriate to New England agriculture and in the best interest of both the farmers and consumers that we represent.

We appreciate your consideration of this request, and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



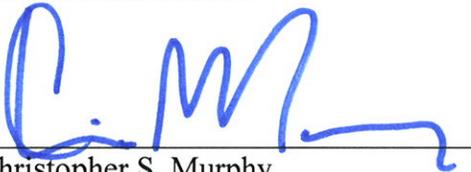
Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



William "Mo" Cowan  
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



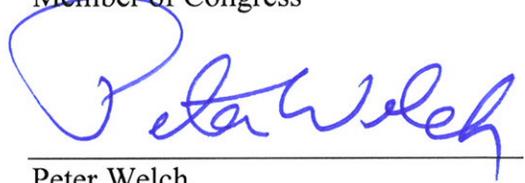
Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress



Jim Langevin  
Member of Congress



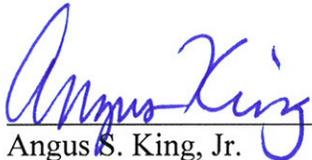
Peter Welch  
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress



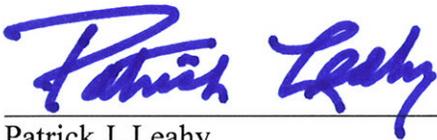
Kelly A. Ayotte  
United States Senator



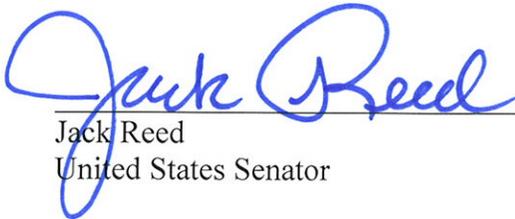
Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



Patrick J. Leahy  
United States Senator



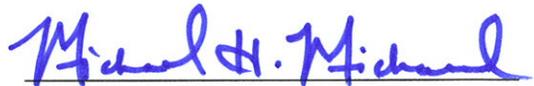
Jack Reed  
United States Senator



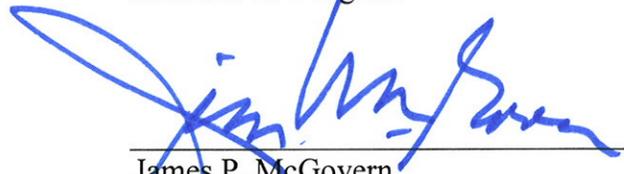
Niki Tsongas  
Member of Congress



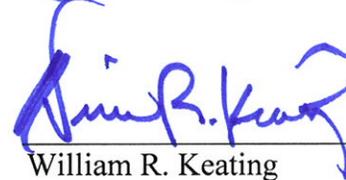
Carol Shea-Porter  
Member of Congress



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William R. Keating  
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