



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0504

<http://feinstein.senate.gov>

May 11, 2010

The Honorable Alfred V. Almanza
Administrator
Food Safety and Inspection Service
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250-3700

Dear Administrator Almanza:

I write to express my deep concern that USDA has not yet declared all dangerous E. coli bacteria strains to be adulterants in food products. As you know, it is against the law to sell meat products containing E. coli o157:h7. It is my belief that this zero-tolerance standard should be extended to all Shiga toxin-producing strains of this deadly pathogen.

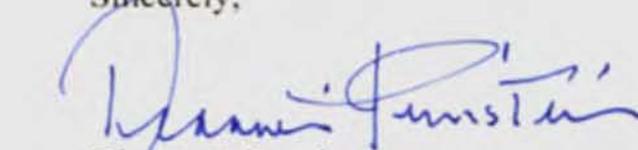
As you are undoubtedly aware, the Food and Drug Administration is currently working with Freshway Foods to recall thousands of pounds of lettuce that are contaminated with E. coli o145. The contaminated food has already sickened nearly 30 people in at least three states. However, millions more are at risk: the contaminated lettuce has also been shipped to Alabama, California, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

I understand that FSIS has received petitions to classify E. coli o145, o111, o26 and other illness-causing strains of E. coli as adulterants in beef. It is estimated that these non-o157 strains sicken 37,000 individuals and cause over 30 deaths per year. Clearly these pathogens present a threat to human health and I ask that you act quickly to ban them from our hamburger meat.

Please know that I appreciate the all of the good work that is done by the inspectors and staff at the Food Safety Inspection Service. The food produced in the U.S. is among the safest in the world, and you and your staff play an integral

role ensuring that safety. However, more can, and must be done to protect consumers from harmful chemicals, bacteria, and residues in our meat. I appreciate your attention to this important matter, and look forward to working with you to improve the safety of our food supply. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

DF:dr