

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, D.C. 20515**

January 16, 2009

Mr. Stewart Parnell  
Owner and President  
Peanut Corporation of America  
2121 Wiggington Road  
Lynchburg, VA 24502

Dear Mr. Parnell:

Under Rules X and XI of the Rules of the United States House of Representatives, the Committee on Energy and Commerce and its Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations are investigating the safety of the nation's food supply. The recent *Salmonella* outbreak associated with the consumption of peanut butter is of particular interest in this investigation.

On January 13, 2009, the Peanut Corporation of America (PCA) recalled peanut butter produced at its Blakely, Georgia, processing facility after laboratory analysis confirmed that peanut butter from a container produced by PCA and distributed by King Nut Companies had the "same genetic fingerprint" as the *Salmonella* associated with the recent nationwide *Salmonella* outbreak.<sup>1</sup> According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, since the beginning of September, at least 434 people in 43 states have become infected with the outbreak strain of *Salmonella* Typhimurium.<sup>2</sup> These illnesses have resulted in approximately 121 hospitalizations and may have contributed to five deaths.<sup>3</sup>

To assist the Committee in its investigation, we request that you provide the Committee with the following information and documents in a detailed written submission:

1. A description of when and where the *Salmonella* contamination of PCA peanut butter was first detected;
2. A description of the identity and source of that contamination;
3. A description of how and when PCA officials first become aware of the *Salmonella* contamination of its peanut butter products;

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<sup>1</sup> Peanut Corporation of America, *Peanut Corporation of America Announces Voluntary Nationwide Recall of Peanut Butter* (Jan. 13, 2009).

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Investigation Update: Outbreak of Salmonella Typhimurium Infections, 2008-2009* (Jan. 14, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

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4. The date(s) that PCA first notified, or was first notified by, federal, state, and local officials of the contamination;
5. The names of all companies to which PCA has shipped peanut butter products in the last 12 months, the dates on which PCA first notified these companies of any suspected contamination, and copies of all correspondence with those companies relating to suspected contamination;
6. A list of all products, and the brand of those products, that have been recalled due to potential *Salmonella* contamination;
7. A description of all steps that PCA has taken to prevent further *Salmonella* contamination of its products;
8. The date of the most recent inspections of PCA's production facility in Blakely, Georgia, by (a) the U.S. Food and Drug Administration; and (b) state or local food safety officials, the names of the inspecting officials, and all records associated with inspections of that facility during the period from January 16, 2004, to the present; and
9. For the period from January 16, 2004, to the present:
  - a. Documents sufficient to show all PCA internal protocols and standards for monitoring and analysis of its peanut butter products; and
  - b. Documents sufficient to show the dates and results of all instances of monitoring or analysis that resulted in a positive finding for microbiological contamination.

Please produce the requested information and documents no later than the close of business two weeks from the date of this letter.

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An attachment to this letter provides additional information on how to respond to the Committee's request. If you have any questions regarding this request, please have your staff contact Kevin Barstow or Stacia Cardille with the Committee staff at (202) 226-2424.

Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman  
Chairman



Bart Stupak  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Oversight and  
Investigations

Enclosure

- cc: Joe Barton  
Ranking Minority Member  
Committee on Energy and Commerce
- cc: John Shimkus  
Ranking Minority Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations