

Energy and Commerce Committee Announces Hearing on Salmonella Outbreak

Rep. Henry A. Waxman, Chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, and Rep. Bart Stupak, Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, announced plans to hold a hearing on February 11, 2009, to examine the recent salmonella outbreak associated with peanut butter manufactured by the Peanut Corporation of America. The company recently recalled peanut butter products that have been linked to more than 500 illnesses and may have contributed to eight deaths.

"The situation at the plant is alarming," said Rep. Waxman. "It shows major gaps in our food safety system. I am extremely troubled by reports that the plant tested positive for salmonella numerous times but nothing was done to ensure that the product did not go on the market."

"There are still far too many questions surrounding FDA's role in allowing the Peanut Corporation of America to distribute contaminated products," said Rep. Stupak. "We have already requested a number of documents from the company and I hope this hearing will help bring to light not only what went wrong but also what FDA and industry can do to prevent future outbreaks."

The following witnesses have been invited to testify:

- Stewart Parnell, Owner and President, Peanut Corporation of America
- Frank M. Torti, M.D., M.P.H., Acting Commissioner, U.S. Food and Drug Administration
- Thomas T. Irvin, Commissioner, Georgia Department of Agriculture
- Darlene Cowart, President, J. Leek Associates, Inc.
- Charles Deibel, Deibel Laboratories

The Oversight Subcommittee will hold the hearing at 10:00 a.m. on Feb 11, 2009, in 2123 Rayburn House Office Building.