

## Dingell Introduces H.R. 3610, the "Food and Drug Import Safety Act of 2007"

Rep. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, along with Reps. Frank Pallone (D-MI), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Health, and Bart Stupak (D-MI), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, today introduced legislation that would dramatically improve our country's system for ensuring the safety of imported food and drugs.

NEWS RELEASE  
Committee on Energy and Commerce

Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman

For Immediate Release: September 20, 2007

Contact: Jodi Seth, 202-225-5735

Dingell Introduces H.R. 3610, the "Food and Drug Import Safety Act of 2007"  
Bill Addresses Growing Problem of Tainted Imports; Strengthens Consumer Protections

Washington, DC — Rep. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, along with Reps. Frank Pallone (D-MI), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Health, and Bart Stupak (D-MI), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, today introduced legislation that would dramatically improve our country's system for ensuring the safety of imported food and drugs.

"We are now importing twice as much food as we were a decade ago, yet the FDA examines less than one percent of it. Tainted imports are slipping into our country undetected and the resulting problems will continue to grow if we don't take immediate steps to tighten safety measures," said Dingell. "Increasing reports of contaminated imports have made it clear that the FDA does not have the resources and authority it needs to ensure the safety of our food and drug supply. This puts every American consumer at risk."

The Committee is conducting a broad investigation into the safety of the nation's food and drug supply, particularly the declining ability of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to adequately conduct inspections and perform laboratory analysis.

The legislation would specifically create a user fee on imported food and drug shipments. Funds generated by the fee would be used to hire additional personnel to perform inspections at both the U.S. border and abroad as well as at FDA labs to increase analysis of food and drug imports. Funds would also be used to test import samples and research new testing techniques.

"Without regular inspections and analysis there is little incentive for food producers and importers to ensure that our food supply is free from harmful and sometimes fatal contaminants," said Dingell.

The legislation would also prevent the Secretary of Health and Human Services from closing or consolidating any of the current 13 FDA field laboratories and grant the agency new authorities to:

- Issue mandatory recalls;
- Require country of origin labeling for food, drugs and medical devices;
- Limits the number of ports of entry for food items;
- Halt imports of certain products until a foreign facility can demonstrate that significant steps have been taken to rectify an identified problem; and
- Increase civil monetary penalties for manufacturers or importers that violate the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act.

A legislative hearing on this bill will be held in the Subcommittee on Health on Wednesday, September 26.

Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515