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NEWS RELEASE

Committee on Energy and Commerce

Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman

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Washington, D.C. — Two leaders of the Committee on Energy and Commerce this week demanded an explanation for the planned closings of seven Food and Drug Administration (FDA) facilities across the country.

In a letter to Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Andrew von Eschenbach, Rep. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and Rep. Bart Stupak (D-MI), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation, expressed particular concern over the closing of the only FDA facility capable of detecting radiological contaminants in food products, and requested a response by July 10 on how the FDA plans to replace the facility's functions.

“We need answers about how and why the FDA chose to shut down facilities that perform essential roles in

ensuring the nation's health and safety," said Dingell. "Recent events have raised widespread concern over the effectiveness of our food inspection system. We need to carefully consider any actions that could detract from our ability to monitor imported food and protect American consumers."

"The FDA just does not understand: as drug safety and food safety concerns rise, the FDA seems bent on reducing their field capabilities to screen drugs and food to keep the American people safe," said Stupak. "This lab performs invaluable work and is the only FDA lab capable of detecting radiological contaminants in food. The FDA's proposal to close this lab raises not only public health concerns, but also significant homeland security concerns."

See the letter

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Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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