

Dingell, Stupak on HHS Agreement on Food and Drug Safety Imports

Statement of Congressman John D. Dingell, Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce

Dingell, Stupak on HHS Agreement on Food and Drug Safety Imports
December 11, 2007

Washington, D.C. - Rep. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, issued the following statement regarding the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Memorandum of Agreement with China to improve the safety of imported food, drugs and medical devices:

"The Committee has spent considerable time investigating how HHS and, more specifically, the FDA - attempt to safeguard food and drugs flowing into this country from abroad.

"We have found that the FDA's lack of resources particularly in the foreign area - is perhaps the central reason that problems affecting food and drug imports continue to surface. I see nothing in these recent HHS pronouncements with China that addresses the FDA's alarming lack of resources.

"Our Committee will continue to provide vigorous oversight, and I will continue working through the legislative process to provide the FDA with the resources and statutory authority it needs to protect the public health."

Rep. Bart Stupak (D-MI), Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, issued the following:

"While we applaud any efforts to work more closely with any major exporter to the U.S. market, given the current resources and staffing at FDA, it is difficult to understand how these agreements will be implemented.

"Until these resource gaps are fully recognized and addressed by HHS, efforts such as these agreements signed with China are akin to rearranging the deck chairs on a sinking ship. If FDA is not properly staffed and given the resources to match its current mission, it can't protect Americans from unsafe food and drugs which may come from abroad. It is just that simple."

-30-