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“We are asking the largest food providers how often they have identified contamination by chemicals such as mercury and microorganisms such as E. coli and salmonella during their quality control testing procedures,” said Dingell. “We know from the Peter Pan peanut butter case and others that internal testing by food processors often fails to detect contaminants. Now we want to know what exactly is reported to the FDA or state public health authorities when companies actually find dangerous chemicals and bacteria in our food.”

Last week the Committee sent letters to private testing labs to determine the extent of adulterated imported food. This food may have found its way to American grocery stores as a result of food import firms hiding from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) lab results that show food to be unsafe. The Committee has been conducting an intensive investigation of the safety of the food supply that has resulted in six congressional hearings and has involved the gathering of information from both the FDA and private firms.

“Food processors have, for the most part, avoided the kind of regulation and inspections that are imposed on drug

and medical device manufacturers,” said Stupak. “We intend to determine exactly how rigorous these large multinational corporations have been in protecting the health of the American consumers.” He continued, “The FDA has failed to protect Americans from food poisoning and we have all witnessed the cascade of recalls and outbreaks of food-borne illnesses that resulted. Our investigation has examined many of these breakdowns in the food safety net. Now it is time to determine if the owners of the largest brand names on supermarket shelves have been forthcoming with the American people about the safety of their products.”

“Americans are rightly concerned that the food they feed their families may not always be safe,” said Dingell. “Our investigation has clearly established that the FDA lacks the leadership and the resources to keep bad food off our grocery shelves and dining room tables.”

Attached is a list of the 313 food recalls that have occurred over the past 16 months according to the FDA and company released notices.

Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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