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December 17, 2004

Dr. Lester M. Crawford, Acting Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857

Dear Commissioner Crawford:

I am writing to request a 90-day extension of the comment period on the Food and Drug Administration's proposed rule regarding the transfer of the European Union Health Certificate Program to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The seafood industry is a vital component of my state's economy and heritage. The export of shrimp, scallops, and live lobsters to the European Union is a multi-million dollar business. This practice benefits not only exporters but also fishermen and processors alike, as exports to the European Union account for a substantial part of the seafood market.

As you can imagine, the Food and Drug Administration's proposal to modify the current program that provides health certificates for seafood shipments to the European Union will require a significant change in the business practices of seafood exporters. It is important that those involved in this business have an appropriate amount of time to evaluate the Food and Drug Administration's proposal in order to offer informed comments. Because of the potential impact of this proposal, I believe a 90-day extension of the comment period is justified so that all interested parties will have an opportunity to fully evaluate this proposal and understand its implications.

Thank you in advance for your careful consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator

SMC:atd