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Thursday, March 02, 2000

Dockets Management Branch
(HF-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Rm. 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

Subject: Docket Number 00N-0120 Safety of imported foods, Public Meeting.
To Whom It May Concern:

First of all this new proposal only addresses foods products at the import level of distribution and it does deal with the very important issues of how retail establishments, such as: Groceries Stores, Restaurants, etc., handle the products. It very important to understand that products can be imported in a perfect state, with no problems and then develop problems due to mishandling by the retail sector of the distribution change.

Another point is, on the import bond issue, this is another issue, which needs to be address. As the new proposal says to increase the bond amounts across the board, which includes the good importers and the bad importers. If you require the bond amounts to increase this will restrict trade, as we know it. First, the small importers will not be able to get a Customs Bond, due to the increase of the underwriting requirements by the surety companies.

U.S. Customs and the Dept. of Food and Drug already the authority to stop the "bad players" By putting their cargo in "secured bonded storage" and requiring a "special bond rider" on the specific shipments that is a problem shipments. Why penalize a whole industry to catch a few "bad players". As well, FDA has the mandatory HACCP inspection program which now required.

On the penalty phase of this proposal. I respectfully request that a separate commission review all penalties and the specifics of each case. Since, U.S. Customs has demonstrated in the past, their unfairness on how the handle penalty cases in general. (Some specific can be provided if necessary) however, I am sure that GAO can find them on their own if they were to look at the way Customs handles penalty cases.

Thank you, for the opportunity to comment on the President Initiatives for imported food safety.

Very Truly Yours,

William A Flegenheimer

00N-0120

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