

*County Mayor of Coffee County*

RAY JOHNSON

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December 19, 2005

Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane
Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852RE: Docker No. 2002 N-0273
RIN 0910-AF 46

To Whom It May Concern:

It has come to the attention of this office that there is a proposal to mandate changes in the methods of disposal of animal carcasses due to the threat of BSE. As Mayor of a rural community in middle Tennessee I would respectfully ask your consideration not to mandate separation of internal parts from the carcasses. This would severely affect the ability of slaughter houses and dead animal pick up services to continue to provide services to the citizens of Coffee County due to the massiveness of the work involved to separate brains and spinal cords from dead animals carcasses. The slaughter houses would have to close down without increased personnel, equipment, etc., which would be economically unfeasible to stay in business. For these businesses to effectively perform this task it would, ultimately, result in these facilities having to close their doors. This would also abandon the Food for the Hungry program which feeds poor and homeless people in the area from deer meat and other wildlife that hunters donate and the slaughter houses process.

In addition, due to the large number of cattle, horses, emu and other large animal farm operations in the County there is an undeniable need for a dead animal pick up service. Environmentally, this would be a disaster if disposal of dead animals was left to each owner to dispose of and, as I understand the circumstances, a mandate such as Docker No. 2002 N-0273 would necessitate an end that service for the County.

Our office has consulted with the Tennessee State Veterinary's office about this matter and they advise us that the methods currently undertaken to prevent BSE have been in place for long enough that a BSE animal would be highly unlikely. I urge you to reconsider mandating this proposed ruling and consider the consequences for local communities—environmental, animal health, Food for the Hungry, economical, as well as other parameters. I appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end. Below the signature, the name "Ray Johnson, Mayor" is printed in a smaller, sans-serif font.

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