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For immediate release

May 8, 2024 -- Today, 21 consumer and industry groups as well as state and local government food safety agencies called on House and Senate appropriators to fund the fight for food safety as a line item within the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FY)2025 budget. The groups jointly issued a letter to both Congressional Committees on Appropriations expressing support for providing state and local food safety regulatory agencies with the fiscal certainty and security that would result from this action.

The signatories included the American Frozen Food Institute (AFFI), Association of American Feed Control Officials (AAFCO), Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO), Association of Public Health Laboratories (APHL), Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), Conference for Food Protection (CFP), Consumer Brands Association (CBA), Consumer Federation of America, Consumer Reports, FMI – The Food Industry Association, George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health, International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA), International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA), Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference (ISSC), National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), National Conference of Interstate Milk Shipments (NCIMS), National Environmental Health Association (NEHA), Pet Food Institute, Stop Foodborne Illness, and Western Growers.

The groups called upon the Committees to take advantage of the current restructuring of the FDA human foods program to streamline operations and better fulfill its mission of food safety protection. The groups believe that while many of the proposed changes will strengthen the FDA's ability to ensure the safety of our food supply, Congress can help modernize the human foods program by bringing clarity and certainty to the agency's budget.

The letter further explained that "despite the critical role played by state and local food agencies, those agencies frequently lack the budgetary certainty needed to operate effectively, which leads to difficulties in hiring and maintaining an adequate number of properly trained staff. Although increased funding provided since the passage of the FSMA has significantly enhanced state and local agencies' capacity to fulfill their food safety mission, FDA often uses funds meant for state and local agencies to pursue other priorities while giving little to no warning to impacted agencies.

“In the FY25 budget proposal, FDA has proposed cutting resources to state and local programs by \$34 million from over \$117 million to \$83 million. This will decimate the ability of state and local programs to continue this level of partnership and greatly reduce the activity of food protection provided by these front-line programs.”

The groups believe a “consistent and predictable funding mechanism for state and local programs is needed. As such, we urge you to include a line item detailing specific funding for state and local food safety issues in your budget allocation for FDA to ensure state and local programs have the budgetary certainty needed to carry out their work.”

You can read the letters in their entirety here:

Senate letter <https://www.afdo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/May-2024-State-and-Local-Funding-Letter-Senate.pdf>

House of Representatives letter <https://www.afdo.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/May-2024-State-and-Local-Funding-Letter-House.pdf>