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U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture

Subcommittee on Department Operations, Oversight, Nutrition, and Forestry

Room 1301, Longworth House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515-6001

March 25, 2002

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you are aware, the Russian Federation has imposed a ban on exports of U.S. poultry citing food safety concerns. This is a poor assessment given that U.S. poultry exports to Russia must meet all U.S. food safety requirements in order to be marketed to consumers. Russian consumers are guaranteed the benefit of purchasing U.S. poultry that meets standards established to ensure the highest achievable level of safety.

Second, trade between the respective countries is essential. Exports to Russia equal 40 percent of total U.S. poultry sales abroad making up two-thirds of the Russian market. Poultry accounts for 20 percent of all trade to Russia with Russians consuming nearly 8 percent of all poultry raised in the U.S. The Russian ban could have a significant effect on the U.S. economy, and particularly in rural communities where the economic disparity would be further expanded.

Russia would like to join the World Trade Organization and remove trade restrictions put in place during the former Soviet Union era. The U.S. is in a position to help Russia achieve these important objectives; however, Russia's trade practices should be weighed in making those determinations. The ban on U.S. poultry can negatively effect Russia's application for inclusion in the WTO.

Therefore, I urge you to contact Russian President Vladimir Putin and ask him to rescind the ban on U.S. poultry. At stake is an important component to both rural communities and the U.S. economy. To delay creates a great amount of uncertainty and only endangers U.S. producers and industry, which are so dependent on this market. If the dispute is not resolved by the time of the U.S.-Russia Summit in May, it will only add unnecessary tension between the two nations, potentially jeopardizing further relations.

For the benefit of both nations, I respectfully request that you work immediately to restore poultry trade with Russia. I appreciate your personal attention to this matter and thank you for the efforts that your Administration has already made to resolve the issue. Please let me know how I may be of assistance to your administration in resolving this matter.

With kindest regards



Bob Goodlatte
Member of Congress

cc: USTR Ambassador Allen Johnson