

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2405

February 6, 2020

COMMITTEE ON  
APPROPRIATIONS  
  
COMMITTEE ON  
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,  
AND FORESTRY  
  
COMMITTEE ON  
ENERGY AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
  
COMMITTEE ON  
RULES AND  
ADMINISTRATION

The Honorable Carmen Rottenberg  
Administrator  
Food Safety and Inspection Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Administrator Rottenberg:

Thank you for your commitment to ensuring that catfish and catfish products imported into the United States are safe, wholesome, and properly labeled. I am writing with regard to fish products exported to the United States from China, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam described as salted egg fish skins or fried crispy fish skin snacks.

I understand the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) issued a recall on December 19, 2019, of nearly 22,000 pounds of ready-to-eat (RTE) Siluriformes (catfish) products imported from Thailand, because they were not presented to FSIS for import re-inspection as required under the Federal Meat Inspection Act. On January 24, 2020, FSIS issued another recall on approximately 12,054 pounds of similar products imported from Singapore, a country which is ineligible to export Siluriformes products to the United States altogether. Import records suggest that the establishments from Thailand and Singapore found in violation are not alone in their efforts to export RTE Siluriformes products to the United States.

As you know, China, Thailand, and Vietnam are the only countries eligible to export Siluriformes fish to the United States. Singapore is not. Further, only Siluriformes fish that fall in the FSIS product categories "Raw Product – Intact" and "Raw Product – Non-Intact" produced in certified establishments are eligible for export (9 CFR Part 557).

I respectfully request that you look further into this situation, and remind the countries referenced above of the eligible and ineligible activities under the Federal Meat Inspection Act.

Thank you for your attention to this important food safety matter.

Sincerely,



CINDY HYDE-SMITH  
United States Senator