



Senator Kelly Ayotte  
144 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

May 23, 2016

Dear Senator Ayotte,

As organizations that represent millions of taxpayers across the country, we write to support your efforts to repeal the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) catfish inspection program. We are pleased to see you and your cosponsors, Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.), using the Congressional Review Act to repeal one of the most demonstrably wasteful and duplicative programs ever enacted.

The unnecessary and duplicative bureaucracy created by this program has now been targeted by the Government Accountability Office (GAO) a record *ten times*: [February 2011](#), [March 2011](#), [May 2012](#), [February 2013](#), [April 2013](#), [April 2014](#), [December 2014](#), [February 2015](#), [April 2015](#), and [April 2016](#).

The USDA spent \$19.9 million to develop and study the catfish inspection program then told GAO it would cost the federal government an additional “\$14 million annually” to run the program. This after GAO found the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) currently spends “less than \$700,000 annually to inspect catfish.” If the cost of other, similar regulatory programs is any guide, the USDA program will cost far more than the estimated \$14 million.

The GAO also notes that it not only wastes taxpayer dollars and duplicates work already being done by the FDA, it actually weakens, rather than strengthens, our food safety systems:

“...the agency’s proposed catfish inspection program further fragments the federal oversight system for food safety without demonstrating that there is a problem with catfish or a need for a new federal program.”

Eliminating wasteful federal spending and burdensome regulation is a very difficult task, especially when proceeding one program at a time. But the value to taxpayers of doing so is undeniable. Thus, as you gather support for S.J. Res 28, please know we strongly support this effort to close the book on this now infamous and embarrassing example of government waste.

The USDA catfish work is an embarrassing waste of tax dollars and so overtly duplicative a program it belongs in the annals of Washington waste history.

Sincerely,

David Williams, President  
Taxpayers Protection Alliance

Norm Singleton, President  
Campaign for Liberty

Jeff Mazzella, President  
Center for Individual Freedom

Tom Schatz, President  
Council for Citizens Against Government Waste

Sabrina Schaffer, Executive Director  
Independent Women's Forum

Heather R. Higgins, President & CEO  
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Brandon Arnold, Executive Vice President  
National Taxpayers Union

Andrew Moylan, Executive Director & Senior Fellow  
R Street Institute

Karen Kerrigan, President & CEO  
Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council

Steve Ellis, Vice President  
Taxpayers for Common Sense