



Congressman Jim Jordan (R-OH), RSC Chairman
Congressman Connie Mack (R-FL), RSC Repeal Task Force Chairman

Repeal the Duplicative Catfish Inspection Program

May 16, 2012

Background: The USDA catfish inspection program was added to the conference report to the 2008 Farm Bill without having been vetted by either the House or Senate. As a result, federal inspection of catfish would be transferred from the FDA to the USDA. FDA currently inspects all commercial seafood. USDA has never inspected seafood. This program would require the Agency to divert funds from core programs to hire or train inspectors with expertise specific to seafood.

Rep. Vicky Hartzler (R-MO) has introduced H.R. 4296, which eliminates this duplicative program.

What We Know:

- **What This Bill Will Do:** This legislation reverses the decision in the 2008 Farm Bill to move catfish inspection jurisdiction from the FDA to the USDA. The USDA program will cost \$30 million to set up and \$15 million each year after that.
- **Why This Is Necessary:** Seafood processors that work with both catfish and any other seafood will be subject to duplicative jurisdiction for the same processing function depending on the species of fish if this program is not repealed. Taxpayers will foot the bill for this duplicative government bureaucracy. Additionally, the FDA and CDC rank commercial catfish as a “low-risk food.” USDA itself has concluded that there is no food safety benefit to creating this new government program. Based on the determination that catfish is a low-risk food and the program is not necessary for human health, this program would likely violate the WTO Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) agreement. Implementation could very well result in a trade war that might dramatically impact U.S. agriculture exports with our trading partners. This would make U.S. agriculture exports, such as beef, soybeans, poultry, and pork, vulnerable to WTO-sanctioned trade retaliation.
- **Government Gone Wild:** This is an example of an agency overstepping its bounds to distort the market at the expense of the American taxpayer. Once again, the federal government is picking winners and losers rather than providing a level playing field where commodities and businesses can compete. What is more, it is doing so in a wasteful and duplicative way.

Conclusion: This program is yet another wasteful and duplicative federal program which has the potential to negatively impact the U.S. economy. This bill constitutes a simple, common-sense, and bi-partisan solution to eliminate unnecessary federal spending and regulation.

MEMBER ACTION ITEM: All RSC Members are encouraged to support H.R. 4296. For more information or to cosponsor, please contact Joe Tvrdy at Joe.Tvrdy@mail.house.gov.

If you would like to participate in the RSC Repeal Task Force, please email Rick.Eberstadt@mail.house.gov.

Items featured are not necessarily endorsed by the RSC or members of the Repeal Task Force.
These Alerts highlight repeal initiatives of individual RSC members.

“The RSC Repeal Task Force’s mission is to put our nation onto a path of greater economic freedom by eliminating U.S. federal laws and regulations that impede or inhibit economic growth, prosperity and opportunity.”