

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 16, 2010

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyard Administration (GIPSA) recently published a proposed rule pursuant to authorities granted by Title XI of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 and existing authorities in the Packers & Stockyards Act.

We all can agree that transparent and fair markets benefit producers, packers, processors, retailers, and consumers. To ensure effective markets, our nation's laws should be enforced to the fullest extent.

The proposed rule is broad in its scope and there is little doubt it will have far reaching effects on meat and poultry production in the United States. It will take considerable time for producers and other industry participants to fully examine the rule's implications and prepare thoughtful comments. For instance, the proposed rule contained no economic analysis regarding its need or impacts and interested parties will be unable to develop this data in the short timeline allotted.

On August 27, 2010 in Fort Collins, Colorado, the USDA/DOJ competition workshop series will hold a workshop on the livestock industry and, specifically, the Packers and Stockyard Act. It is certain that the proposed rule will be a major topic of discussion at that workshop. We ask that you extend the comment period for the GIPSA proposed rule beyond the current closing date of August 23, 2010 to a minimum of 120 days after the competition workshop in Fort Collins. This change will allow interested parties to include the testimony from not just the Fort Collins event, but all of the USDA/DOJ workshops, in their analysis of the proposed rule.

Sincerely,




Bob Lucas

John Emerson

Jerry Moran

Christian Smith

Larry Kinell

Jean Schmidt

Dennis G. Thompson

La Du

Steve King

Brad Ellwood

Mike McIntyre

Roy Blunt

Lee Terry

Bob Goodlatte

Carl L. Lee

Ala Rogers (AK)

K. Michael Zy

Steve Hefner

John

Jeff Fortenberry