

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
June 28, 2007

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### **STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY ON FDA IMPORT ALERT**

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Today, Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, released the following statement in response to the FDA's countrywide import alert for a wide variety of farm-raised seafood from China.

"Today's announcement underscores the necessity of strong steps to protect the food American families eat. Earlier this year, the Senate took an important step by including provisions to improve food safety -- including the safety of farm-raised seafood -- in the comprehensive FDA reform bill approved earlier this year."

Below is a section of the FDA reform bill passed in the Senate:

#### **SEC. 515. ENHANCED AQUACULTURE AND SEAFOOD INSPECTION.**

(a) Findings- Congress finds the following:

(1) In 2007, there has been an overwhelming increase in the volume of aquaculture and seafood that has been found to contain substances that are not approved for use in food in the United States.

(2) As of May 2007, inspection programs are not able to satisfactorily accomplish the goals of ensuring the food safety of the United States.

(3) To protect the health and safety of consumers in the United States, the ability of the Secretary of Health and Human Services to perform inspection functions must be enhanced.

(b) Heightened Inspections- The Secretary of Health and Human Services (referred to in this section as the 'Secretary') is authorized to, by regulation, enhance, as necessary, the inspection regime of the Food and Drug Administration for aquaculture and seafood, consistent with obligations of the United States under international agreements and United States law.

(c) Report to Congress- Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report that--

(1) describes the specifics of the aquaculture and seafood inspection program;

(2) describes the feasibility of developing a traceability system for all catfish and seafood products, both domestic and imported, for the purpose of identifying the processing plant of origin of such products; and

(3) provides for an assessment of the risks associated with particular contaminants and banned substances.

(d) Partnerships With States- Upon the request by any State, the Secretary may enter into partnership agreements, as soon as practicable after the request is made, to implement inspection programs regarding the importation of aquaculture and seafood.

(e) Authorization of Appropriations- There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out this section.

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