

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 16, 2014

Margaret A. Hamburg, Commissioner
U.S. Food and Drug Administration
10903 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20993

Dear Commissioner Hamburg:

We write to request that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) increase funding towards research into *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* (V.p.) illnesses associated with consumption of raw molluscan shellfish. We share your concern for the recent increases in illnesses involving V.p. and we feel that more scientific research is necessary to developing proper controls that will reduce the risk to consumers and to sustain a healthy domestic shellfish industry.

As you are aware, a number of states have seen an increase in illnesses associated with V.p. We are fully supportive of the development of effective control methods to ensure the safety of shellfish supplies. Unfortunately, at this time there is limited scientific knowledge of these emerging pathogenic strains of V.p. Consequently, there is little insight regarding the types of controls that could be effective in minimizing the risk of illness. We recognize that the FDA has recommended more stringent time to temperature controls to the states and the Interstate Shellfish Sanitation Conference (ISSC) to address this problem. However, more scientific analysis is needed. The FDA has acknowledged that more information is needed to identify effective controls for reducing the risk of V.p. illnesses from raw shellfish, which is why the FDA should provide adequate research funding before any final recommendations are made.

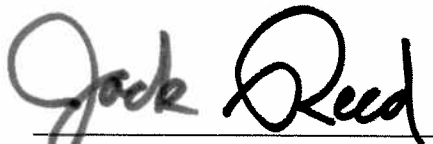
During the 2013 ISSC Biennial Meeting the FDA proposed the ISSC take the following actions:

1. Assess regional and environmental differences that may better define the combination(s) of post-harvest time and temperature controls that will be most effective for a given region or State and;
2. Ensure that the results of research efforts will be fully considered by the membership of the ISSC.
3. In addition to new research activities directed at scientifically defining effective time and temperature controls, the ISSC shall request that States and industry submit to the ISSC *Vibrio* Management Committee data and information relative to efforts in their respective State associated with time and temperature assessment and control activities. This work shall be conducted over the next one (1) to two (2) years and the science that is generated and compiled shall be used to compose an ISSC proposal for consideration at the 2015 Biennial Meeting of the ISSC for controlling the post-harvest growth of *Vibrios*. The ISSC

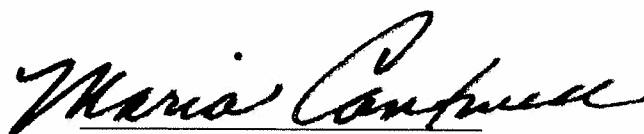
Executive Board will be briefed at each of its semi-annual meetings regarding all ongoing work associated with this effort.

Therefore, we request that the FDA make \$150,000 available annually for the next two years to the ISSC to support state efforts to complete the studies. We look forward to the completion of these efforts to address the risk of Vibrios and improvements to the National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) to ensure a continued safe supply of molluscan shellfish.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed
United States Senator



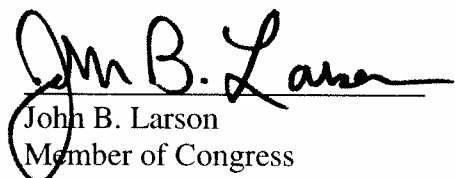
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



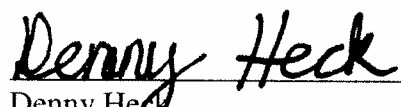
John B. Larson
Member of Congress



Robert Wittman
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Denny Heck
Member of Congress