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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6300

November 4, 2025

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

Ronald Sargent
Interim Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board
1014 Vine Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dear Mr. Sargent,

Ensuring that American families have access to safe, quality food is essential for us to advance President Trump's agenda to Make America Healthy Again. To fulfill this important mission, however, we must know more about what is in the foods Americans consume. Such visibility is impeded due to the growing reliance on imported foods from other countries.

In 2024, the United States imported approximately \$213 billion in agriculture products.¹ As a result of greater imports, Americans spent over \$550 billion in food and beverage products that were imported or contained imported ingredients.² Despite increased consumer spending on imported food, we have seen the potential safety risks from an overreliance on foreign manufacturers. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently issued a finding that in the last year of the Biden Administration, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) was estimated to conduct approximately 1,000 foreign inspections out of the 125,000 foreign facilities subject to FDA inspections.³

We have experienced a serious increase in food safety incidents as a result of imported food products. For example, FDA has issued six safety alerts on elevated lead levels in cinnamon

¹ Angelica Williams and James Kaufman, *U.S. Agricultural Trade – U.S. Agricultural Trade at a Glance*, U.S. Department of Agriculture (July 22, 2025), [https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/international-markets-us-trade/us-agricultural-trade/us-agricultural-trade-at-a-glance#:~:text=Share%20of%20Imports%20in%20Consumption,Consumption%20\(2008%2D2022\).&text=Unexpected%20Error-.An%20unexpected%20error%20occurred.,contact%20your%20Tableau%20Server%20Administrator..](https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/international-markets-us-trade/us-agricultural-trade/us-agricultural-trade-at-a-glance#:~:text=Share%20of%20Imports%20in%20Consumption,Consumption%20(2008%2D2022).&text=Unexpected%20Error-.An%20unexpected%20error%20occurred.,contact%20your%20Tableau%20Server%20Administrator..)

² Quinton Baker and James Chandler Zachary, *Imports accounted for less than 20% of U.S. food and beverage spending in 2023*, U.S. Department of Agriculture (May 15, 2025), <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/charts-of-note/chart-detail?chartId=112543>.

³ *Food Safety: FDA Should Strengthen Inspection Efforts to Protect the U.S. Food Supply*, Government Accountability Office (Jan. 8, 2025), <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-25-107571.pdf>.

since 2024.⁴ The original safety alert in July 2024 was due to adulterated cinnamon imported from Ecuador. More recently, FDA has issued eight safety alerts since August on imported shrimp from a single shrimp processor due to potential Cesium-137 contamination.⁵

Cesium-137 is a radioactive substance that can cause substantial health harms. This follows a long record of potential safety harms from imported shrimp. Indeed, earlier this month, a vendor was fined for selling imported shrimp at the largest shrimp festival in the world that took place in October, raising questions about the potential safety of shrimp consumed by families.⁶ Shockingly, foreign shrimp stakeholders have been accused of human trafficking related to the supply chain for shrimp fishing.⁷

Despite these numerous concerns, Kroger continues to sell imported shrimp at your stores, rather than support domestic fisheries that offer a safer product while supporting small American businesses. To that end, we ask that you answer the following questions by **November 20, 2025**.

1. Has Kroger issued any voluntary recalls of shrimp products in the last year? If so, how many?
 - a. Approximately how much shrimp by volume was affected by these recalls?
 - b. How did Kroger engage with state and federal agencies to inform consumers about potential safety risks associated from recalled shrimp?
 - c. How does Kroger use information collected from past safety recalls to identify potentially unsafe shrimp as part of future purchasing decisions?
2. Does Kroger have any internal policies to evaluate the supply chain risk associated with imported shrimp? If so, what are those policies?
3. Does Kroger work with any third-party certification bodies to ensure shrimp sold at your stores is free from contaminants? If so, how does Kroger work with these bodies to deter bad actors seeking to sell shrimp in the United States?

⁴ *More Ground Cinnamon Products Added to FDA Public Health Alert Due to Presence of Elevated Levels of Lead*, Food and Drug Administration (Oct. 10, 2025), <https://www.fda.gov/food/alerts-advisories-safety-information/more-ground-cinnamon-products-added-fda-public-health-alert-due-presence-elevated-levels-lead>.

⁵ *FDA Advises Public Not to Eat, Sell, or Serve Certain Imported Frozen Shrimp from an Indonesian Firm*, Food and Drug Administration (Oct. 7, 2025), <https://www.fda.gov/food/alerts-advisories-safety-information/fda-advises-public-not-eat-sell-or-serve-certain-imported-frozen-shrimp-indonesian-firm>.

⁶ Andrea Ramey, *Vendor fined for selling imported shrimp at National Shrimp Festival*, NBC15 News (Oct. 10, 2025), <https://myabc15.com/news/local/vendor-fined-for-selling-imported-shrimp-at-national-shrimp-festival>.

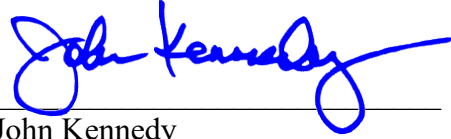
⁷ Hannah Walhout, *A new report sheds light on the problems behind our imported shrimp*, FoodPrint (Mar. 28, 2024), <https://foodprint.org/blog/imported-shrimp/>.

4. Does Kroger have policies in place to prioritize purchasing decisions with domestic companies, including small or local fisheries?

Sincerely,



Bill Cassidy, M.D.
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Health,
Education, Labor, and Pensions



John Kennedy
U.S. Senator