

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 15, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We write to bring your attention to the immense opposition to Valley Meat Company's proposed horse slaughter facility in southern New Mexico.

Currently, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is reviewing an application by Valley Meat Company to resume horse slaughter operations. As you know, horse slaughter has been essentially forbidden in the United States due to a Congressional prohibition on funding for inspections of horse meat.

The FY 2012 Agriculture Appropriations bill effectively ended a five-year funding ban on USDA horse slaughter inspections, allowing horse slaughter facilities to legally reopen.

An amendment banning horse slaughter inspections, offered by Rep. Moran to the FY 2012 bill, was approved in the House Appropriations Committee. However, the language was stripped during closed-door conference committee negotiations.

This amendment was again added to the FY 2013 Agriculture Appropriations Bill last year, but for the first half of this fiscal year the federal government operated on a continuing resolution based upon the FY 2012 bill.

Attempts were made by members of Congress to again include prohibition language to the FY 2013 Continuing Resolution (CR) bill that passed Congress in March of 2013, but the language was ultimately not included.

The prospect of resuming horse slaughter in the United States raises grave concerns. In addition to the inhumane nature of horse slaughter there are legitimate policy reasons why USDA should not approve the facility requested by Valley Meat Company, nor utilize limited resources for horse meat inspections.

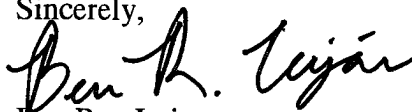
More specifically, the FY 2013 CR included an additional \$55 million for the Food Safety and Inspection Service. This increase was intended to ensure that existing food inspections continue through the sequester. Unlike cattle, horses are not raised as food animals in the U.S. and are routinely treated with substances that have not been approved by the FDA for human consumption and would therefore require different inspection protocols than those for


other livestock. Utilizing federal funds to craft and implement a new protocol would be contrary to Congressional intent and be inadvisable considering the possible resumption of the Congressional rider banning the inspections in an upcoming fiscal year.


Additionally, the British Food Standards Agency recently discovered horsemeat mixed into frozen food products. Since this discovery, European regulators have uncovered contamination from horsemeat in a number of food products labeled as beef and sold across the continent. These discoveries have severely damaged the sales of frozen foods in Europe and are representative of the difficulties inherent in preserving an unadulterated beef supply should U.S. slaughterhouses begin to slaughter horsemeat as well.

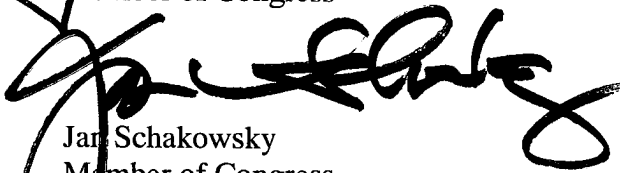
We recognize and applaud that the Administration's 2014 budget request excludes money for inspectors for horse slaughter plants, which would effectively keep them from operating. However, we feel that approving inspections for horse slaughter at this time is fiscally unaffordable, detrimental to current meat inspections for beef, pork, and poultry, and has the potential to damage the highly regarded reputation of U.S. meat and poultry markets.

Sincerely,


Ben Ray Lujan
Member of Congress


James P. Moran
Member of Congress


Patrick Meehan
Member of Congress


Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress