

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0104

July 17, 2014

Mr. Brian Deese
Acting Director
The Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Mr. Deese:

We look forward to the full implementation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Catfish Inspection program, as mandated by the 2008 Farm Bill. Despite the congressional directive that the regulations governing the program be finalized within 18 months of the bill's enactment – nearly six years ago – the regulations remain under development and the program is not yet implemented. We are pleased that the Agricultural Act of 2014, enacted February 7, 2014, further clarified the program and required final regulations within 60 days of the bill's enactment. However, this 60-day period has since passed without the regulations being finalized as required by law.

We understand the USDA submitted a draft final rule to the Office of Management and Budget on May 30, 2014. Given the long delay in reaching this point, we ask that no later than August 15, 2014, you provide us with a timeline for the completion of the regulations. Once the final regulations are issued, we look forward to seeing that they comport with the intent of Congress to ensure fair and equitable treatment to all catfish, domestically produced and imported, and that the transition to the inspection program occurs concurrently for both domestic and foreign catfish.

If you have any questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Andrew Herther of my staff at 202-224-4124. Thank you.

Very truly yours,



Jeff Sessions
United States Senator

JS: bj