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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-5401

February 27, 2013

Mr. Alfred V. Almanza
Administrator
Food Safety and Inspection Service
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 331-E
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Almanza:

I write to convey general concerns that my office has recently received about a perceived inadequacy in the number of total Food Safety and Inspection Service personnel assigned to Puerto Rico to inspect regulated meat, poultry and egg products. I am informed that there may exist an opportunity for the Service to make considerable improvements in both the number and timeliness of mandatory and voluntary inspections it makes for these products, particularly in the commercial retail markets, on the Island.

In view of these concerns, I respectfully request that the Service conduct, consistent with all applicable laws, regulations and guidelines, a thorough review of the current number of inspectors and other personnel it assigns to Puerto Rico, and that it make any appropriate increases in the number of such positions there in order to minimize adverse impact of inspection delays on meat, poultry, and egg producers and to further protect public health.

I would appreciate receiving a copy of the results from this requested review, and the continued assistance of the Service in working with producers in my district to improve the inspection process. I also ask that you bear in mind these concerns and needs in Puerto Rico should the Service be compelled to make any budget decisions implementing sequestration and as you prepare the Fiscal Year 2014 and future year budget requests.

Sincerely,



Pedro R. Pierluisi
Member of Congress

cc: Mr. Larry Hortert, Southeast Regional Director, Food Safety and Inspection Service