

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

October 11, 2007

The Honorable Chuck Conner
Acting Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are writing to express our concern over USDA's continued allowance of misleading labels on poultry products.

As you know, current USDA labeling guidelines allow for poultry injected with saltwater or seaweed solutions to be prominently labeled as "*100% All Natural*." However, these same guidelines allow the warning alerting consumers to these added ingredients, most often with the phrase "*Enhanced with up to Fifteen Percent Chicken Broth*", to be only $\frac{1}{4}$ the size of the product name. This misguided policy has enabled some processors to lead consumers into believing they are purchasing unaltered, natural poultry products. While we agree that seaweed and sea salt may occur naturally in seawater, these ingredients certainly do not occur naturally in poultry.

We believe this labeling practice is deceptive and is misleading consumers into believing they are purchasing all natural chicken when, in fact, they are paying billions more for added saltwater weight and drastically increasing their sodium intake. A recent nationwide survey revealed that over 70% of consumers were unaware that some poultry companies routinely add sodium and other additives to their fresh chicken. Furthermore, nearly 3 out of 4 consumers failed to notice the statements warning of additional ingredients because the writing is significantly smaller in comparison to the entire package design.

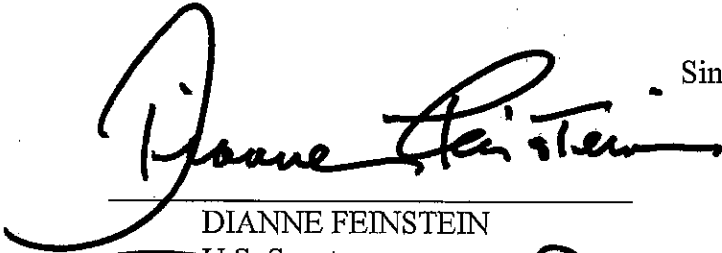
The health implications of this practice are serious and deserve prompt attention. A natural serving of chicken, without saltwater and seaweed extract contains 70 mg of sodium but enhanced chicken can contain up to 370 mg of sodium per serving. This is roughly equivalent to the sodium levels in a bag of regular potato chips.

We firmly believe USDA should immediately tighten its policies on fresh poultry labeling to ensure American consumers are able to make informed choices about their food. Without change, individuals across the country will continue to be charged additional costs for enhanced

products while adding potentially dangerous amounts of sodium to their diets.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to working with you to quickly resolve this issue.

Sincerely,



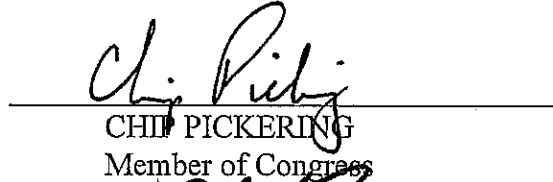
DIANNE FEINSTEIN
U.S. Senator




BARBARA BOXER
U.S. Senator



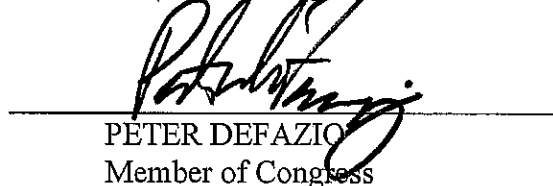
DENNIS CARDOZA
Member of Congress



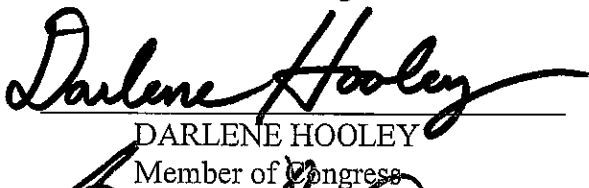
CHIP PICKERING
Member of Congress



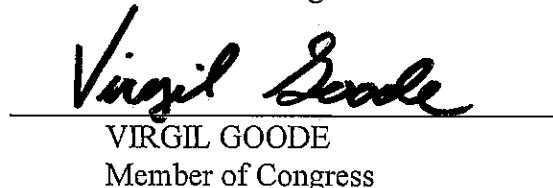
DEVIN NUNES
Member of Congress



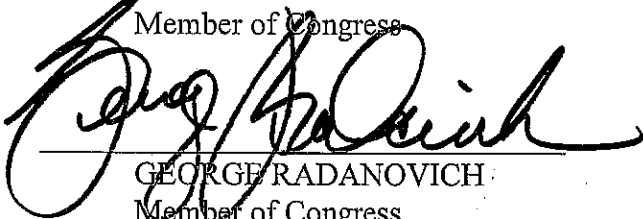
PETER DEFAZIO
Member of Congress



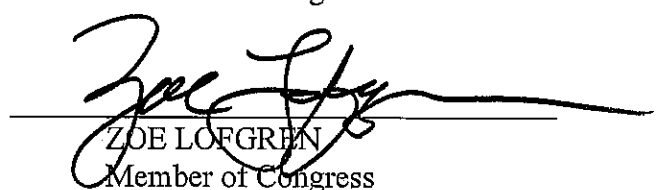
DARLENE HOOLEY
Member of Congress



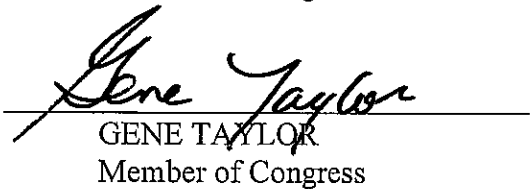
VIRGIL GOODE
Member of Congress



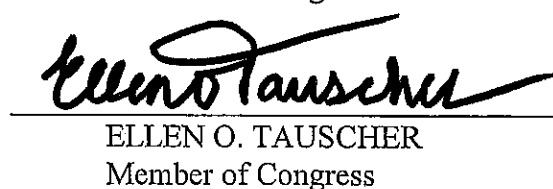
GEORGE RADANOVICH
Member of Congress



ZOE LOFGREN
Member of Congress



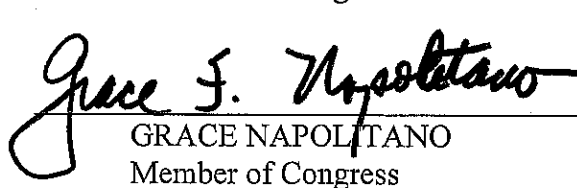
GENE TAYLOR
Member of Congress



ELLEN O. TAUSCHER
Member of Congress



LORETTA SANCHEZ
Member of Congress



GRACE NAPOLITANO
Member of Congress



TAMMY BALDWIN
Member of Congress



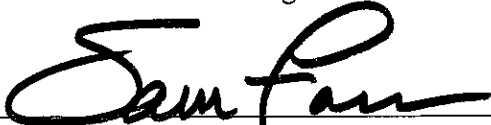
LOIS CAPPS
Member of Congress



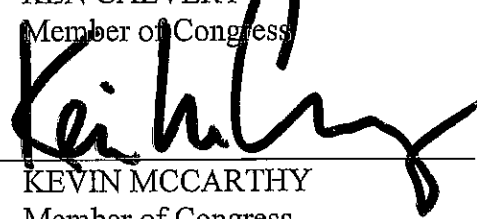
DAN LUNGREN
Member of Congress



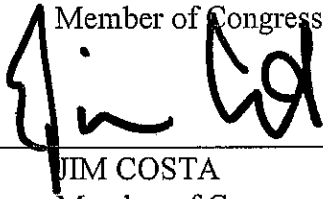
KEN CALVERT
Member of Congress



SAM FARR
Member of Congress



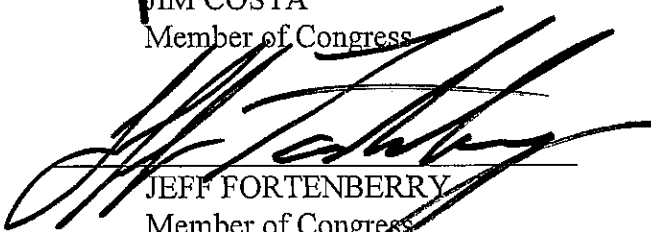
KEVIN MCCARTHY
Member of Congress



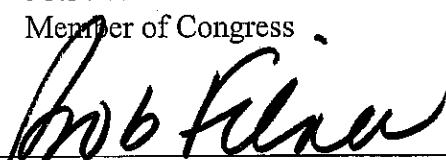
JIM COSTA
Member of Congress



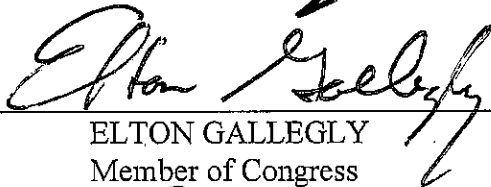
JOE BACA
Member of Congress



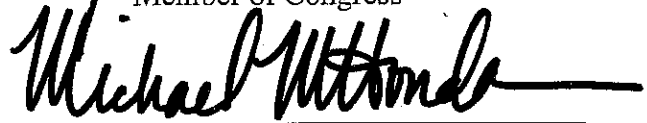
JEFF FORTENBERRY
Member of Congress



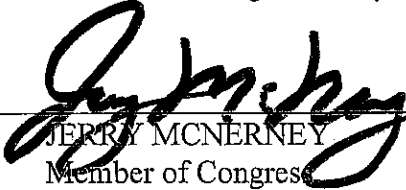
BOB FILNER
Member of Congress



ELTON GALLEGLY
Member of Congress



MIKE HONDA
Member of Congress



JERRY MCNERNEY
Member of Congress



MIKE THOMPSON
Member of Congress

Lucille Roybal-Allard
LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD
Member of Congress

David Obey
DAVID OBEY
Member of Congress

Duncan Hunter
DUNCAN HUNTER
Member of Congress

Howard L. Berman
HOWARD BERMAN
Member of Congress

Henry Waxman
HENRY WAXMAN
Member of Congress

Ron Kind
RON KIND
Member of Congress

Jane Harman
JANE HARMAN
Member of Congress

Roger Wicker
ROGER WICKER
Member of Congress

Wayne T. Gilchrest
WAYNE GILCHRIST
Member of Congress

G.K. Butterfield
G.K. BUTTERFIELD
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky
JAN SCHAKOWSKY
Member of Congress