



May 2, 2007

Honorable Arlen Specter
Member
United States Senate
711 SHOB
Washington, DC 20510-3802

RE: Consolidation of Import Document Review & Labs

Dear Senator Specter:

The Philadelphia Regional Port Authority, the Pennsylvania state agency responsible for the management and development of the Port of Philadelphia, joins other members of the Philadelphia maritime community in opposing the Food and Drug Administration's consolidation of Import Entry Review & Laboratories. We believe it will have an extraordinarily negative effect on Pennsylvania's international maritime commerce.

As you know, we in the Philadelphia port region take pride in our ability to handle perishable cargoes with expertise and efficiency. Critical to that ability is our working relationship with various federal government agencies, who have oversight authority in this area. Elimination of this Philadelphia FDA laboratory will impede our ability to process large volumes of imported produce and meat. Having local FDA personnel available to provide quick and accurate response is essential for the port to maintain its leadership in this area.

The lack of local FDA lab personnel and facilities could cause major financial impact on shippers that import their products through our facilities. This is a critical aspect of our opposition. Unnecessary government action, which increases the cost of doing business at our port facilities, can only lead to a diminution in cargo volumes.

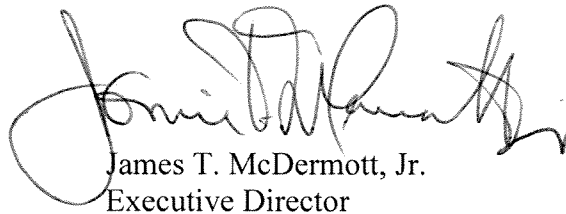
We also believe this consolidation plan has the potential of compromising public health and safety. It is of the utmost importance for our importers and brokers to have prompt information regarding the health standards of imported perishable commodities in a timely manner. Elimination of FDA laboratory facilities and personnel in Philadelphia

will jeopardize the port's capacity to move these essential commodities into the United States market efficiently and safely.

The entire Philadelphia port community appreciates your steadfast support and assistance of its efforts. You recognize the tremendous economic return that the Port of Philadelphia provides for Pennsylvania and the entire Philadelphia region. All of us are grateful for that support. I know that you have already begun consultation with fellow Senators whose states will also be negatively affected by this ill-considered FDA plan. It is essential the FDA reconsider its plans. In light of increased security concerns at our nation's seaports, now is not the time to be weakening essential infrastructure. If there is anything we can do to support your leadership in this effort, do not hesitate to call upon us.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James T. McDermott, Jr.", written over a printed name and title. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

James T. McDermott, Jr.
Executive Director

JTM:dmb

cc: Brian Preski, Esq.