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UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ROSA L. DELAURO

3RD DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

November 17, 2021

Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

I write urging you to use your authority to halt imports of beef from Brazil into the United States immediately.

The decision by Brazilian officials to hide the country's June 2021 cases of atypical bovine spongiform encephalopathy for months was reckless and appalling. Actions such as these threaten international efforts to combat outbreaks of animal diseases around the globe.

At the same time, we have known for years the underlying structural problems with Brazil's meat inspection system. In 2017, an audit by the Department's Food Safety and Inspection Service showed Brazil's meat inspection system failed to meet the most basic requirements needed to ensure sanitary conditions and to prevent product contamination.

That report also concluded that proper procedures were not in place to avoid conflicts of interest between inspectors—whose duty it is to uphold food safety standards—and the meatpacking companies that were caught bribing workers just a few years ago.

We should act *before* a crisis occurs in order to protect American consumers, their families, and the farmers and ranchers of this country. This issue is made worse by our lack of mandatory country of origin labeling. Families are left without an option to tell where their beef comes from, and farmers and ranchers are forced to compete against beef imported from a country that refuses to play by the rules.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

ROSA L. DeLAURO

Chair

House Committee on Appropriations

Cc: Ms. Sandra Eskin, Deputy Under Secretary for Food Safety, USDA