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August 25, 1998

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON FOOD SAFETY

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts)

For Immediate Release

August 25, 1998

August 25, 1998

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON FOOD SAFETY

SUBJECT: National Academy of Sciences Report

My Administration is committed to ensuring that the American people enjoy the safest food possible. We have made great progress by implementing science-based prevention control systems for seafood, meat, and poultry; developing a comprehensive initiative to ensure the safety of domestic and imported fruits and vegetables; and launching an interagency food safety initiative that focuses on key food safety issues from the farm to the table. We can and must continue to build upon these efforts.

Under our current food safety system, several different Federal agencies have responsibility for improving food safety. Within the framework of our interagency initiative, we have taken a number of steps to improve the coordination of our food safety efforts. Most recently, we established a Joint Institute for Food Safety Research to develop a strategic plan for conducting food safety research activities and to coordinate all Federal food safety research, including with the private sector and academia.

Today, I signed an Executive Order establishing the President's Council on Food Safety. To strengthen and focus our efforts to coordinate food safety policy and resources and improve food safety for American consumers, the Council will develop a comprehensive strategic plan for Federal food safety activities, ensure the most effective use of Federal resources through the development and submission of coordinated food safety budgets, and oversee the Joint Institute for Food Safety Research.

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) recently issued a thoughtful and highly informative report on food safety issues, entitled "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption." This report recommends additional ways to enhance coordination and improve effectiveness in the food safety system, including through reform of current food safety legislation.

I hereby direct the Council to review and respond to this report as one of its first orders of business. After providing opportunity for public comment, including public meetings, the Council shall report back to me within 180 days with its views on the NAS's recommendations. In

developing this report, the Council should take into account the comprehensive strategic Federal food safety plan that it will be developing.

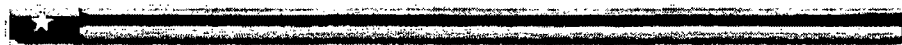
I thank the Council for its efforts to improve food safety, and I look forward to the continued leadership of the President's Council on Food Safety.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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August 25, 1998

EXECUTIVE ORDER

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts)

For Immediate Release

August 25, 1998

EXECUTIVE ORDER

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PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON FOOD SAFETY

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to improve the safety of the food supply through science-based regulation and well-coordinated inspection, enforcement, research, and education programs, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment of President's Council on Food Safety.

(a) There is established the President's Council on Food Safety ("Council"). The Council shall comprise the Secretaries of Agriculture, Commerce, Health and Human Services, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Assistant to the President for Science and Technology/Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, and the Director of the National Partnership for Reinventing Government. The Council shall consult with other Federal agencies and State, local, and tribal government agencies, and consumer, producer, scientific, and industry groups, as appropriate.

(b) The Secretaries of Agriculture and of Health and Human Services and the Assistant to the President for Science and Technology/Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy shall serve as Joint Chairs of the Council.

Sec. 2. Purpose. The purpose of the Council shall be to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for Federal food safety activities, taking into consideration the findings and recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences report "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption" and other input from the public on how to improve the effectiveness of the current food safety system. The Council shall make recommendations to the President on how to advance Federal efforts to implement a comprehensive science-based strategy to improve the safety of the food supply and to enhance coordination among Federal agencies, State, local, and tribal governments, and the private sector. The Council shall advise Federal agencies in setting priority areas for investment in food safety.

Sec. 3. Specific Activities and Functions. (a) The Council shall develop a comprehensive strategic Federal food safety plan that contains specific recommendations on needed changes, including measurable outcome goals. The principal goal of the plan should be the establishment of a seamless, science-based food safety system. The plan should address the steps necessary to achieve this goal, including the key public health, resource, and management issues regarding food safety. The planning process should consider both short-term and long-term issues including new and emerging threats and the special needs of vulnerable populations such as children and the elderly. In developing this plan, the Council shall consult with all interested parties, including State and local agencies, tribes, consumers, producers, industry, and academia.

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(b) Consistent with the comprehensive strategic Federal food safety plan described in section 3(a) of this order, the Council shall advise agencies of priority areas for investment in food safety and ensure that Federal agencies annually develop coordinated food safety budgets for submission to the OMB that sustain and strengthen existing capacities, eliminate duplication, and ensure the most effective use of resources for improving food safety. The Council shall also ensure that Federal agencies annually develop a unified budget for submission to the OMB for the President's Food Safety Initiative and such other food safety issues as the Council determines appropriate.

(c) The Council shall ensure that the Joint Institute for Food Safety Research (JIFSR), in consultation with the National Science and Technology Council, establishes mechanisms to guide Federal research efforts toward the highest priority food safety needs. The JIFSR shall report to the Council on a regular basis on its efforts: (i) to develop a strategic plan for conducting food safety research activities consistent with the President's Food Safety Initiative and such other food safety activities as the JIFSR determines appropriate; and (ii) to coordinate efficiently, within the executive branch and with the private sector and academia, all Federal food safety research.

Sec. 4. Cooperation. All actions taken by the Council shall, as appropriate, promote partnerships and cooperation with States, tribes, and other public and private sector efforts wherever possible to improve the safety of the food supply.

Sec. 5. General Provisions. This order is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to, nor does it, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers or any person. Nothing in this order shall affect or alter the statutory responsibilities of any Federal agency charged with food safety responsibilities.

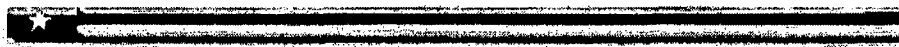
WILLIAM J. CLINTON

THE WHITE HOUSE,
August 25, 1998.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON FOOD SAFETY

August 24, 1998

Q: What did the Clinton Administration announce?

A: The Clinton Administration announced: (1) an executive order creating a President's Council on Food Safety, which will develop a comprehensive strategic plan for federal food safety activities and ensure that federal agencies annually develop coordinated food safety budgets; and (2) a Presidential directive to the Council to review the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report, "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption," and to report back with its response to the report, including appropriate additional actions to improve food safety.

President's Council on Food Safety

Q: What will the President's Council on Food Safety do?

A: The Council will have three primary functions, including: (1) developing a comprehensive strategic federal food safety plan; (2) advising agencies of priority areas for investment in food safety and ensuring that federal agencies annually develop coordinated food safety budgets; and (3) overseeing the recently established Joint Institute for Food Safety Research and ensuring that it addresses the highest priority research needs.

In addition, the Council, as one of its first orders of business, will review the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report, "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption." After providing opportunity for public comment, including public meetings, the Council will report back to the President within 180 days with its response to the NAS report. The Council's report will consider appropriate additional actions to improve food safety, including proposals for legislative reform of the food safety system.

Q: Why did the President create this Council? Is this a response to last week's NAS report advocating greater coordination in the food safety system?

A: The President created the Council as the next logical step in his efforts to modernize and better coordinate federal food safety efforts. He wanted to ensure that all agencies in the federal government with responsibility for food safety issues follow a single food safety plan and develop coordinated budgets. In addition, the Council will provide a mechanism to review the NAS's proposals and determine whether any additional steps are appropriate.

Q: The Executive Order creates a three-headed council when last week's NAS Report called for a single person to be in charge of food safety. Isn't that what's really

needed?

A: The Executive Order creates the most effective mechanism possible, consistent with current law, to achieve coordination in the food safety system. Proposals for a single food safety czar, such as the one the NAS made, require legislation. The President has asked the new council to review that proposal to determine whether legislation of this kind is necessary. In the meantime, the President will take whatever executive action he can to achieve better integration and coordination of the food safety system.

Q: How does the federal government already coordinate its food safety activities? Why is additional coordination necessary?

A: The Clinton Administration already has taken significant strides toward building a coordinated food safety system. Most recently, the President announced the creation of the Joint Institute for Food Safety Research, which will develop a strategic plan for coordinating government and private food safety research activities. In addition, the Administration announced the Foodborne Outbreak Response Coordinating Group (FORC-G) which brings together federal, state, and local agencies to develop a comprehensive, coordinated, national foodborne illness response system.

What this proposal does is to ensure, for the first time ever, that the entire range of food safety activities and budgetary decisions is reviewed and coordinated by a single entity. Although we believe that we have achieved good coordination in the past, especially in light of the fragmented statutory framework, this new entity will make further progress in this area by insisting on a unified food safety policy and a coordinated food safety budget process.

Q: Isn't this proposal essentially procedural in nature? Doesn't it just move the boxes around on an organizational chart, rather than giving anyone increased ability to do anything?

A: Increasing integration and coordination among the various parts of the food safety system is vital to making sure food is safe -- just as important as providing needed budgetary resources or enforcement authority. Our food safety system is, by law, highly fragmented: for example, because of the way different foods are regulated by different agencies, the frozen pepperoni pizza you buy is regulated by two separate agencies. We must make sure that all these agencies are working together and pulling in the same direction. Today's executive order will serve just this crucial purpose.

Q: Who are the members of the Council?

A: The members of the Council are the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, the Director

of the National Partnership for Reinventing Government, the Assistant to the President for Science and Technology, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Secretary of Commerce, and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. The Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Assistant to the President for Science and Technology will serve as Joint Chairs of the Council.

NAS Report

Q: What Does the NAS report say?

A: The National Academy of Sciences report, "Ensuring Safe Food From Production to Consumption," makes three basic conclusions: (1) an effective and efficient food safety system must be based on science; (2) the current statutes governing food safety should be revised in order to achieve a food safety system based on science; and (3) Congress should enact legislation to establish a unified and central framework for managing federal food safety programs, which should be headed by a single official with responsibility for all federal food safety activities.

Q: Does the Administration agree with the NAS report?

A: The Administration welcomes the opportunity to review the NAS report and believes that the report will play an important role in leading to further improvements. The Administration is encouraged that the NAS report supports many current Administration initiatives such as:

- new science-based systems to prevent contamination, including the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) system for inspections of meat, poultry, and seafood;
- a new science-based early warning system to help detect and respond to outbreaks of foodborne illness; and
- proposed legislation to ensure that the FDA halts imports of fruits, vegetables, and other food products that do not meet U.S. food safety requirements or come from countries that do not provide the same level of protection as is required for U.S. products.

The report's proposal to place a single official in charge of our food safety system, which would require new legislation, is well worth exploring. The President has asked the new Council to report back on this proposal and other ideas for improving the effectiveness of the food safety system within six months.

Food Safety Budget

Q: What did the President ask for in the FY 1999 Budget request with respect to food

safety?

A: The FY 1999 Budget included a \$101 million increase over the FY 1998 level for the Administration's inter-agency food safety initiative. Of this total amount, \$25 million would finance FDA's improved capability to ensure the safety of imported foods and \$5 million would permit the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to assist state health departments to detect foodborne diseases and to improve foodborne disease surveillance. Another \$24 million of the Initiative would go towards: developing rapid tests for the detection of pathogens; improving slaughter and processing systems to avoid contamination of food products; and establishing baseline data to better assess the risk of contamination in the US food supply. In addition, \$7.8 million would be used to expand consumer education initiatives, especially for high risk populations (the elderly and children).

Q: What is the status of the Food Safety Initiative in the FY 1999 Appropriation bills?

A: So far, Congress has failed to provide full funding of the Administration's food safety initiative. The Senate Appropriations Committee provided only about \$3 million for these efforts, but the full Senate voted by a large bipartisan majority for an amendment offered by Senator Harkin to provide an additional \$66 million. Senator Harkin's amendment required USDA's tobacco program administrative costs to be partially funded by the tobacco industry, and used the savings as the major offset for the cost of expanded food safety programs for both USDA and FDA. The House-passed Agriculture Appropriations bill would provide only \$16.8 million of the requested increase: \$7 million for FDA imported food safety and \$9.8 million for USDA activities. The Administration will continue to work with the conference committee members to urge them to provide full funding for the food safety initiative. The House Labor-HHS Appropriations Committee has approved the \$5 million food safety request for CDC.

Q: Is all of the \$101 million that the President asked for necessary for food safety?

A: Without additional funding for the Food Safety Initiative, the federal food safety agencies will not be able fully to develop appropriate response, prevention, and control strategies for reducing the level of food-borne illness in the United States.

In addition to the funding requested to strengthen FDA's import inspection and expand USDA's and FDA's research and education activities, funding is requested to continue to improve FDA's food safety infrastructure, as started in the FY 1998 Food Safety Initiative. Also, significant resources are targeted to strengthening both USDA's and FDA's risk assessment capabilities. Risk assessment is important in helping to identify foods and processes that are most likely to lead to food-borne illness. Finally, funding is requested to expand the USDA's and HHS's ability to identify and track food-borne illnesses.

Legislative Proposals

Q: What is Clinton Administration's FDA import legislation?

A: The Administration called on Congress to pass food safety legislation, introduced by Senators Milkulski and Kennedy and Reps. Eshoo and Pallone, that gives the FDA greater authority over imported foods. This legislation will ensure that the FDA halts imports of fruits, vegetables, and other food products that do not meet U.S. food safety requirements or that come from countries that do not provide the same level of protection as is required for U.S. products. The legislation also enables the FDA to halt imports from a country or facility that refuses to allow FDA inspections. This legislation gives FDA authority that is similar to USDA's existing authority to prevent the importation of unsafe meat and poultry.

Q: What is the Clinton Administration's USDA mandatory recall/civil penalties legislation?

A: The Clinton Administration called on Congress to pass the Food Safety Enforcement Enhancement Act, sponsored by Senators Harkin, Daschle, Johnson, and Leahy, which gives USDA the ability to assess civil fines and to order mandatory recalls of unsafe meat and poultry products. Currently, the USDA can respond to food safety violations only by bringing criminal actions or withdrawing inspections; all recalls are done on a voluntary basis and no civil penalties are available. This new legislation will give USDA additional enforcement tools to enhance food safety.

Q: Aren't these legislative proposals essentially dead? Has Congress moved on them at all?

A: These proposals are not dead. The Administration is working with members to try to get these vital pieces of legislation passed and expects the Congressional sponsors of these measures to raise the bills on the House and Senate floors.

**PRESIDENT CLINTON SIGNS EXECUTIVE ORDER
CREATING COUNCIL ON FOOD SAFETY
August 24, 1998**

President Clinton today will sign an Executive Order to create a President's Council on Food Safety, which will develop a comprehensive strategic plan for federal food safety activities and ensure that federal agencies annually develop coordinated food safety budgets. The President also will sign a directive to the Council to review the recently issued National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report, "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption," and to report back with its response to the report, including appropriate additional actions to improve food safety.

President's Council on Food Safety. The President will sign an Executive Order establishing a President's Council on Food Safety (Council). The Council will have three primary functions, including: (1) developing a comprehensive strategic federal food safety plan; (2) advising agencies of priority areas for investment in food safety and ensuring that federal agencies annually develop coordinated food safety budgets; and (3) overseeing the recently established Joint Institute for Food Safety Research and ensuring that it addresses the highest priority research needs.

- **Comprehensive strategic federal food safety plan.** The Council will develop a comprehensive plan to improve the safety of the nation's food supply by establishing a seamless, science-based food safety system. The plan will address the steps necessary to achieve this improved system, focusing on key public health, resource, and management issues and including measurable outcome goals. The planning process will consider both short and long-term issues including new and emerging threats and the special needs of vulnerable populations such as children and the elderly. In developing this plan, the Council will consult with all interested parties, including state and local agencies, tribes, consumers, producers, industry, and academia.
- **Coordinated federal food safety budgets.** Consistent with the comprehensive strategic federal food safety plan, the Council will advise agencies of priority areas for investment in food safety and ensure that federal agencies annually develop coordinated food safety budgets. This coordinated food safety budget process will sustain and strengthen existing activities, eliminate duplication, and ensure the most effective use of resources for improving food safety.
- **Oversight of federal food safety research efforts.** The Council will ensure that the Joint Institute for Food Safety Research addresses the highest priority food safety research gaps. The Institute will report, on a regular basis, to the Council on its efforts to conduct and coordinate food safety research activities and will receive direction from the Council on research needed to establish the most effective possible food safety system.

Review of NAS Report. The President will direct the Council, as one of its first orders of business, to review the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report, "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption." After providing opportunity for public comment, including public

meetings, the Council will report back to the President within 180 days with its response to the NAS report. The Council's report will consider appropriate additional actions to improve food safety, including proposals for legislative reform of the food safety system.

Public Meeting to Develop Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Federal Food Safety

Activities. The Clinton Administration will publish notice of the first public meeting, to be held on October 2 in Arlington, Virginia, to begin development of the Council's comprehensive strategic plan for federal food safety activities. The meeting will engage consumers, producers, industry, food service providers, retailers, health professionals, State and local governments, Tribes, academia, and the public in the strategic planning process.

Clinton Administration Accomplishments In Improving Food Safety

The President's announcement builds on a strong record of food safety initiatives, ensuring that Americans eat the safest possible food. The Administration has put into place improved safety standards for meat, poultry, and seafood products, and has begun the process of developing enhanced standards for fruit and vegetable juices. The Administration also has expanded research, education, and surveillance activities throughout the food safety system.

*July 1998. President creates a Joint Institute of Food Safety Research which will develop a strategic plan for conducting and coordinating all federal food safety research activities, including with the private sector and academia.

*February 1998. Administration announces its proposed food safety budget, which requests an approximate \$101 million increase for food safety initiatives.

*May 1997. Administration announces comprehensive new initiative to improve the safety of nation's food supply --"Food Safety from Farm to Table" -- detailing a \$43 million food safety program, including measures to improve surveillance, outbreak response, education, and research.

*January 1997. President announces new Early-Warning System to gather critical scientific data to help stop foodborne disease outbreaks quickly and to improve prevention systems.

*August 1996. President signs Safe Drinking Water Act of 1996. The law requires drinking water systems to protect against dangerous contaminants like *Cryptosporidium*, and gives people the right to know about contaminants in their tap water.

*August 1996. President signs Food Quality Protection Act of 1996, which streamlines regulation of pesticides by FDA and EPA and puts important new public-health protections in place, especially for children.

*July 1996. President announces new regulations that modernize the nation's meat and poultry inspection system for the first time in 90 years. New standards help prevent *E.coli* bacteria contamination in meat.

*December 1995. Administration issues new rules to ensure seafood safety, utilizing HACCP regulatory programs to require food industries to design and implement preventive measures and increase the industries' responsibility for and control of their safety assurance actions.

*1994. CDC embarks on strategic program to detect, prevent, and control emerging infectious disease threats, some of which are foodborne, making significant progress toward this goal in each successive year.

*1993. Vice-President's National Performance Review issues report recommending government and industry move toward a system of preventive controls.

SAFE FOOD COALITION

888 Seventeenth Street, NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20006 (202) 822-8060

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
AUGUST 25, 1998

CONTACT: Christopher Gould
202/822-8060

SAFE FOOD COALITION PRAISES ADMINISTRATION'S FOOD SAFETY COUNCIL; CALLS FOR CONGRESS TO ACT

(WASHINGTON) The Safe Food Coalition today praised the Clinton Administration for its decision to create a President's Council on Food Safety and urged Congress to act on recommendations by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to designate a single federal official with responsibility for federal food safety activities.

"The Clinton Administration has done an excellent job in raising the public policy profile of food safety issues," said Carol Tucker Foreman, Coordinator of the Safe Food Coalition and former Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Food and Consumer Services. "The food safety council will help improve coordination even more."

Last week, the NAS released a report which recommended revising current food safety statutes so that they are uniformly driven by scientific estimates of risk to human health. Among other recommendations, the report called for designating a single federal official with both responsibility for federal food safety activities and authority to allocate resources based on risk to human health. The Safe Food Coalition has long endorsed the creation of a single food safety agency.

"The creation of the council is a productive step toward improving the safety of America's food supply," said Foreman. "It can take steps to coordinate the use of existing resources. However, most of the recommendations made by the Committee to Ensure the Safety of Food from Production to Consumption require congressional action. The Committee was established at the direction of Congress. Now the Committee has given Congress a clear and appropriate set of steps that must be taken to address foodborne illness. Congress should act on those recommendations immediately. We expect that the President Council on Food Safety will encourage and provide leadership for the additional steps that must be taken."

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The Safe Food Coalition is a group of consumer, public health, senior citizen and labor organizations that have worked together since 1986 to improve the nation's food safety system. The organization was instrumental in persuading the federal government to revise the hundred year old meat and poultry inspection system.

SAFE FOOD COALITION

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EMBARGOED FOR 12:00 NOON
AUGUST 20, 1998

CONTACT: Christopher Gould
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SAFE FOOD COALITION PRAISES NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES REPORT

Urges Congress to Act on Recommendation to Designate a Single Federal Official with Responsibility for Federal Food Safety Activities

(WASHINGTON, Aug. 20, 1998) The Safe Food Coalition today praised the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report, *Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption*, and urged Congress to take the steps recommended by the committee to improve the safety of the nation's food supply. Following is a statement regarding the NAS report by Carol Tucker Foreman, coordinator of the Safe Food Coalition and former Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Food and Consumer Services:

"The National Academy of Sciences has conducted its study as directed by Congress. Its recommendations are clear and appropriate, and mostly require congressional action. The committee has done an admirable job in a very short period of time -- they've told Congress what it must do to reduce food-borne illness. Now Congress must act.

"Every American who has suffered from food poisoning or knows someone who has -- and every mother who has nursed a sick child through a bout of *salmonella* or *E. coli* O157:H7 poisoning -- should demand that Congress act immediately to institute the changes that are needed to improve food safety. The most important of those changes recommended by the committee are:

- Revise current food safety statutes so that they are uniformly driven by scientific estimates of risk to human health;
- Establish by statute a unified and central framework for managing federal food safety programs, headed by a single federal official who has both authority and control of resources necessary to manage food safety efforts; and
- Allocate the necessary resources to carry out the programs vital to protecting public health.

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"The Safe Food Coalition has earlier endorsed creation of a single food safety agency. Creation of such an agency is the most organizationally effective method for achieving the NAS recommendations.

"Congress can respond to the NAS report this year by adding language to the FY 1999 Agricultural Appropriations Committee Report establishing a committee to explore the details of establishing an appropriate structure and advising the President and Congress on language necessary to change existing food safety laws to respond to the NAS Committee's report.

"In addition, Congress should act this year to pass the Clinton Administration's proposals to improve the safety of imported fruits and vegetables and to institute improved enforcement authority, including recall of contaminated meat and poultry and institution of civil penalties in meat and poultry processing."

- 30 -

The Safe Food Coalition is a group of consumer, public health, senior citizen and labor organizations that have worked together since 1986 to improve the nation's food safety system. The organization was instrumental in persuading the federal government to revise the hundred year old meat and poultry inspection system.

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts)

For Immediate Release

August 25, 1998

August 25, 1998

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON FOOD SAFETY

SUBJECT: National Academy of Sciences Report

My Administration is committed to ensuring that the American people enjoy the safest food possible. We have made great progress by implementing science-based prevention control systems for seafood, meat, and poultry; developing a comprehensive initiative to ensure the safety of domestic and imported fruits and vegetables; and launching an interagency food safety initiative that focuses on key food safety issues from the farm to the table. We can and must continue to build upon these efforts.

Under our current food safety system, several different Federal agencies have responsibility for improving food safety. Within the framework of our interagency initiative, we have taken a number of steps to improve the coordination of our food safety efforts. Most recently, we established a Joint Institute for Food Safety Research to develop a strategic plan for conducting food safety research activities and to coordinate all Federal food safety research, including with the private sector and academia.

Today, I signed an Executive Order establishing the President's Council on Food Safety. To strengthen and focus our efforts to coordinate food safety policy and resources and improve food safety for American consumers, the Council will develop a comprehensive strategic plan for Federal food safety activities, ensure the most effective use of Federal resources through the development and submission of coordinated food safety budgets, and oversee the Joint Institute for Food Safety Research.

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) recently issued a thoughtful and highly informative report on food safety issues, entitled "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption." This report recommends additional ways to enhance coordination and improve effectiveness in the food safety system, including through reform of current food safety legislation.

I hereby direct the Council to review and respond to this report as one of its first orders of business. After providing opportunity for public comment, including public meetings, the Council shall report back to me within 180 days with its views on the NAS's recommendations. In developing this report, the Council should take into account the comprehensive strategic Federal food safety plan that it will be developing.

I thank the Council for its efforts to improve food safety, and I look forward to the continued leadership of the President's Council on Food Safety.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts)

For Immediate Release

August 25, 1998

EXECUTIVE ORDER

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PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON FOOD SAFETY

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to improve the safety of the food supply through science-based regulation and well-coordinated inspection, enforcement, research, and education programs, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment of President's Council on Food Safety. (a) There is established the President's Council on Food Safety ("Council"). The Council shall comprise the Secretaries of Agriculture, Commerce, Health and Human Services, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Assistant to the President for Science and Technology/Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, and the Director of the National Partnership for Reinventing Government. The Council shall consult with other Federal agencies and State, local, and tribal government agencies, and consumer, producer, scientific, and industry groups, as appropriate.

(b) The Secretaries of Agriculture and of Health and Human Services and the Assistant to the President for Science and Technology/Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy shall serve as Joint Chairs of the Council.

Sec. 2. Purpose. The purpose of the Council shall be to develop a comprehensive strategic plan for Federal food safety activities, taking into consideration the findings and recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences report "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption" and other input from the public on how to improve the effectiveness of the current food safety system. The Council shall make recommendations to the President on how to advance Federal efforts to implement a comprehensive science-based strategy to improve the safety of the food supply and to enhance coordination among Federal agencies, State, local, and tribal governments, and the private sector. The Council shall advise Federal agencies in setting priority areas for investment in food safety.

Sec. 3. Specific Activities and Functions. (a) The Council shall develop a comprehensive strategic Federal food safety plan that contains specific recommendations on needed changes, including measurable outcome goals. The principal goal of the plan should be the establishment of a seamless, science-based food safety system. The plan should address the steps necessary to achieve this goal, including the key public health, resource, and management issues regarding food safety. The planning process should consider both short-term and long-term issues including new and emerging threats and the special needs of vulnerable populations such as children and the elderly. In developing this plan, the Council shall consult with all interested parties, including State and local agencies, tribes, consumers, producers, industry, and academia.

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(b) Consistent with the comprehensive strategic Federal food safety plan described in section 3(a) of this order, the Council shall advise agencies of priority areas for investment in food safety and ensure that Federal agencies annually develop coordinated food safety budgets for submission to the OMB that sustain and strengthen existing capacities, eliminate duplication, and ensure the most effective use of resources for improving food safety. The Council shall also ensure that Federal agencies annually develop a unified budget for submission to the OMB for the President's Food Safety Initiative and such other food safety issues as the Council determines appropriate.

© The Council shall ensure that the Joint Institute for Food Safety Research (JIFSR), in consultation with the National Science and Technology Council, establishes mechanisms to guide Federal research efforts toward the highest priority food safety needs. The JIFSR shall report to the Council on a regular basis on its efforts: (i) to develop a strategic plan for conducting food safety research activities consistent with the President's Food Safety Initiative and such other food safety activities as the JIFSR determines appropriate; and (ii) to coordinate efficiently, within the executive branch and with the private sector and academia, all Federal food safety research.

Sec. 4. Cooperation. All actions taken by the Council shall, as appropriate, promote partnerships and cooperation with States, tribes, and other public and private sector efforts wherever possible to improve the safety of the food supply.

Sec. 5. General Provisions. This order is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to, nor does it, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers or any person. Nothing in this order shall affect or alter the statutory responsibilities of any Federal agency charged with food safety responsibilities.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

THE WHITE HOUSE,
August 25, 1998.

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THE WHITE HOUSE AT WORK

Tuesday, August 25, 1998

THE CLINTON/GORE ADMINISTRATION: WORKING TO ENSURE BETTER FOOD SAFETY

Today, I signed an Executive Order establishing the President's Council on Food Safety. To strengthen and focus our efforts to coordinate food safety policy and resources and improve food safety for American consumers, the Council will develop a comprehensive strategic plan for Federal food safety activities, ensure the most effective use of Federal resources through the development and submission of coordinated food safety budgets, and oversee the Joint Institute for Food Safety Research.

President Bill Clinton
August 25, 1998

Today, President Clinton signs an Executive Order creating a President's Council on Food Safety. The Council will develop a comprehensive strategic plan for federal food safety activities and ensure that federal agencies annually develop coordinated food safety budgets. The President will also sign a directive instructing the Council to review the recently issued National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report, "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption," and to report back with its response to the report, including appropriate additional actions to improve food safety.

The President's Council on Food Safety. The President will sign an Executive Order establishing a President's Council on Food Safety. The Council will have three primary functions, including:

- *Developing A Comprehensive Strategic Federal Food Safety Plan.* The Council will develop a comprehensive plan to improve the safety of the nation's food supply by establishing a seamless, science-based food safety system. The plan will address the steps necessary to achieve this improved system, focusing on key public health, resource, and management issues and including measurable outcome goals. The planning process will consider both short and long-term issues including new and emerging threats and the special needs of vulnerable populations such as children and the elderly. In developing this plan, the Council will consult with all interested parties, including state and local agencies, tribes, consumers, producers, industry, and academia.
- *Coordinating Federal Food Safety Budgets.* Consistent with the comprehensive strategic federal food safety plan, the Council will advise agencies of priority areas for investment in food safety and ensure that federal agencies annually develop coordinated food safety budgets. This coordinated food safety budget process will sustain and strengthen existing activities, eliminate duplication, and ensure the most effective use of resources for improving food safety.
- *Overseeing Federal Food Safety Research Efforts.* The Council will ensure that the Joint Institute for Food Safety Research addresses the highest priority food safety research gaps. The Institute will report, on a

regular basis, to the Council on its efforts to conduct and coordinate food safety research activities and will receive direction from the Council on research needed to establish the most effective possible food safety system.

Proposing Reforms To The Food Safety System. The President will direct the Council, as one of its first orders of business, to review the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report, "Ensuring Safe Food from Production to Consumption." After providing opportunity for public comment, including public meetings, the Council will report back to the President within 180 days with its response to the NAS report. The Council's report will consider appropriate additional actions to improve food safety, including proposals for legislative reform of the food safety system.

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