

Attachment — Additional Questions for the Record

The Honorable Joseph R. Pitts

1. How many years have you sold domestic or imported catfish (siluriformes)?

The Clyde's restaurant Group started selling domestic wild blue catfish 2 years ago. We started selling the product as a "water to table" initiative that also helps rid the Chesapeake Bay from this highly invasive species.

2. In your experience, is catfish (siluriformes) a low-risk food?

Yes, in our company's experience this is a low-risk food. We hold our suppliers to the highest possible standard of performance when it comes to food safety, and if we thought there was a problem with wild blue catfish or any other item, we would stop offering it until the problem were addressed. But that is simply not the case here: We do not believe the wild blue catfish poses food safety concerns.

3. Does domestic or imported catfish (siluriformes) present any unique food safety issues that would warrant a separate government program from all other seafood?

None that we can see. Again, we hold all our suppliers to the highest possible food safety standards, and we expect them all to meet FDA requirements for all seafood. That said, we do not believe wild blue catfish presents a food safety challenge that justifies having this duplicative USDA program.

4. What is the impact of having USDA regulate catfish and FDA regulate all other seafood on your business?

It is helpful to understand the process of bringing wild blue catfish to market. Watermen in the Chesapeake Bay, North Carolina, or Delaware catch the fish. Processors cut the fish into forms that chefs like. Distributors send the fish to retailers or restaurants. Consumers order the fish at meals away from home or buy at shops to take home and cook it. Requiring watermen, processors, and distributors to meet a new and expensive regulatory system will probably eliminate the market. Many of these watermen are catching the Wild Blue catfish to help save the other fish they harvest. The new USDA system is creating problems for many of the watermen who supply to our distributor. Having to deal with two regulators—one for the catfish, and one for ALL the other species they sell – is too costly to comply with. As a result, many are walking away from the wild blue catfish business, which will eliminate a product our customers enjoy and in the process upend a market-based solution to an environmental problem.