

**Opening Statement of Chairman Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Health Hearing
“Waste and Duplication in the USDA Catfish Inspection Program”
December 7, 2016**

Today’s hearing is a valuable opportunity to hear more about the USDA Catfish Inspection Program. The Energy and Commerce Committee on a bipartisan basis, along with the nonpartisan government watchdog, the General Accountability Office, have warned about the harm, waste, and duplication of the USDA Catfish Inspection Program. Rather than improve our country’s food safety, the program will further fracture our food safety inspection programs. In addition, the USDA catfish program will harm businesses and will increase prices for consumers and ultimately harm the catfish market.

That is why the Senate voted overwhelmingly under the Congressional Review Act to reject the USDA Catfish Inspection Program. I appreciate our witnesses for being here and for Health Subcommittee Chairman Pitts holding this hearing today so we can more closely examine this important issue.

Before I yield the remainder of my time, I want to take a moment to recognize Mr. Pitts, the subcommittee chairman of the past six years, who is retiring at the end of this Congress. Joe Pitts has been a leader for some of the

committee's greatest accomplishments: reforming how Medicare pays America's physicians, improving the safety of our nation's drug supply chain, advancing dozens of bills to improve our nation's public health, and helping shepherd through the 21st Century Cures Act that will land shortly on President Obama's desk.

Joe, as a chairman your accomplishments and contributions are tremendous. You have been an unwavering and outstanding partner during your tenure as chairman, particularly as we journeyed down the path to Cures. The roundtables, the hearings, the markups, you were here pushing every step of the way and I cannot thank you enough. You have been a strong, gracious, and remarkable leader for this committee, leading one of the most productive subcommittees on Capitol Hill. Thank you for your tireless efforts and your friendship. I wish you nothing but the best to you and Ginny in this next chapter.