

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2101

January 29, 2007

Dr. Andrew C. von Eschenbach  
Commissioner  
Food and Drug Administration  
5600 Fishers Lane  
Rockville, Maryland 20857

Dear Dr. von Eschenbach:

We're writing to request respectfully that you immediately suspend any plans to consolidate the FDA's Office of Regulatory Affairs laboratories. We ask that you provide us with details on the proposal.

Recent press reports have alerted us that the FDA proposal may reduce the number of ORA labs from 13 to possibly as few as four. These labs form the backbone of the FDA's work in ensuring the safety of food, medical equipment, and cosmetics. The proposed consolidation would be a major shift in FDA structure and reach, and it should undergo Congressional review before any changes are implemented.

We recognize that FDA faces serious budget constraints that force difficult choices, but it is far from clear that consolidating ORA labs is a reasonable response to these difficult constraints.

The network of ORA labs ensures that the nation has a geographically diverse talent pool of skilled scientists and technology to help the agency fulfill its mission. During a national emergency this broad network could prove particularly vital in rapidly responding to public health crises.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that the FDA has the resources it needs to fulfill its mission, which is why we ask you to suspend the consolidation plan and provide us with related documentation. Such information will assist us in identifying and closing any critical funding gaps which need to be addressed, and we urge you to work with us to help strengthen the 13 ORA labs.

With respect and appreciation, and we thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,



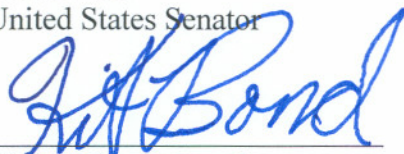
Edward M. Kennedy  
United States Senator



Arlen Specter  
United States Senator



Carl Levin  
United States Senator



Christopher S. Bond  
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator



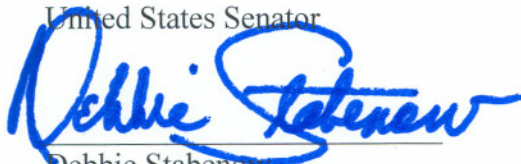
Sam Brownback  
United States Senator



Wayne Allard  
United States Senator



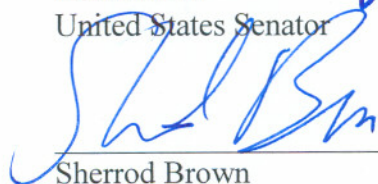
Blanche L. Lincoln  
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



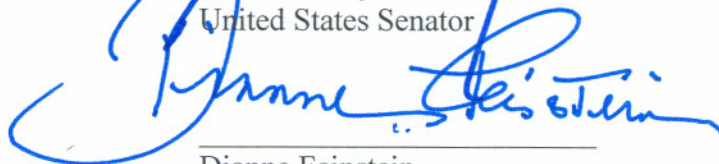
Ken Salazar  
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



John F. Kerry  
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



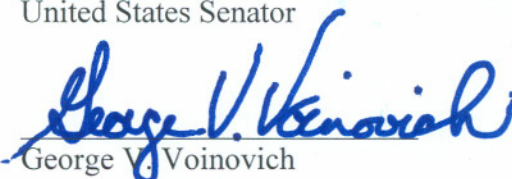
Patty Murray  
United States Senator



Pat Roberts  
United States Senator



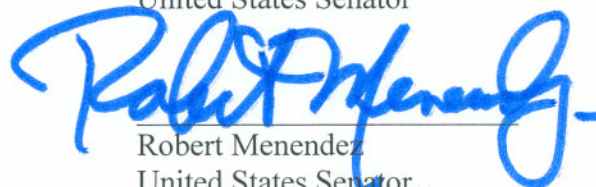
Charles Schumer  
United States Senator



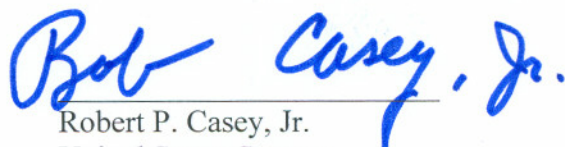
George V. Voinovich  
United States Senator



Mark L. Pryor  
United States Senator



Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator