

Ranking Member Elijah Cummings
US House of Representatives
House Oversight and Government Reform
Committee
2471 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Henry Waxman
US House of Representatives
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2204 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressmen Cummings and Waxman,

We, the undersigned organizations, write to thank you for your efforts to preserve the public's right to know about agricultural and livestock operations. Thanks in part to your leadership, the public will continue to have access to information that is critical for public health and safety.

We greatly appreciate your letter to conferees on the Farm Bill defending open government and highlighting the dangers of a House-passed provision that would have undermined the FOIA's balanced approach to releasing information that is in the public interest. As you stated in your letter, "statutory exemptions for FOIA and other disclosure requirements should be enacted only in rare circumstances," and the FOIA already includes strong protections for personal and private information. These protections rightly keep the personal information of individuals and small family operations from inappropriately being released.

We thank you, again, for your continued commitment to the protection of the public's right to know and for your leadership in removing this damaging provision from the Farm Bill.

Sincerely,

American Association of Law Libraries

American Society of News Editors

OpenTheGovernment.org

Project On Government Oversight – POGO

Public Citizen

Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press