



THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
Washington, D.C. 20230

April 30, 2009

Her Excellency
Elvira S. Nabiullina
Minister of Economic Development
of the Russian Federation
Moscow

Dear Madam Minister:

In the interest of open dialogue on matters of mutual interest to economic development in our respective countries, I am writing you about a particular issue that has come to my attention.

I am concerned about Russia's recently imposed import restrictions on U.S. poultry, pork, and beef products. I assure you that Americans, including my family, continue to enjoy these U.S. products. We have no reservations about their safety. Indeed, both the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States have stated that it is safe to eat properly prepared pork and pork products. The CDC has said categorically that the H1N1 virus is not transmitted by food. There have been no reports of the new H1N1 human influenza occurring in swine in the United States.

In the absence of any scientific evidence linking consumption of properly handled and prepared meat with transmission of this virus, I strongly urge Russia to rescind these restrictions. Our actions during this time of economic uncertainty and international concern about the influenza virus must be based on sound science. While trade cannot override legitimate public health concerns, neither should health concerns be used as a pretext for measures that needlessly restrict trade. Any assistance you can provide in encouraging fair examination and removal of these restrictions would be welcome.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Locke".

Gary Locke



THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
Washington, D.C. 20230

April 30, 2009

His Excellency
Alexei L. Kudrin
Deputy Chairman of the Government
of the Russian Federation
Moscow

Dear Mr. Deputy Chairman:

It was a pleasure to meet with you last week to discuss our mutual interests and the opportunities we share, and I look forward to our continued discussions on trade issues, including Russia's accession to the World Trade Organization. As you noted, we need to speak frankly about our concerns. In that vein, a particular issue has come to my attention.

I am concerned about your government's recently imposed import restrictions on American pork products. I assure you that my family, like families across this country, continues to eat American pork. We have no reservations about its safety.

Indeed, both the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States have stated that it is safe to eat properly prepared pork and pork products. The CDC has said categorically that the H1N1 virus is not transmitted by food. There have been no reports of the new H1N1 human influenza occurring in swine in the United States.

I strongly urge the Russian Federation to remove these restrictions. Government actions during this time of economic uncertainty and international concern about influenza must be based on scientific evidence. There should be no restrictions on trade without cause.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Locke".

Gary Locke