

# SAFE FOOD COALITION

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## Executive Order Fails to Consider Benefits of Food Safety Regulation

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**Washington, D.C.** – Members of the Safe Food Coalition condemn the Trump administration’s move to increase the risk that Americans will get sick from eating contaminated food. The executive order signed by President Trump Monday requires federal agencies to hold regulatory costs on industry to zero but ignores the fact that health standards protect the public against companies that don’t play by the rules. Those same federal regulatory actions protect honest companies against those businesses that cut corners to increase profits.

This order is likely to compromise Americans’ food safety and increase the risk of widespread outbreaks of foodborne illness by hampering the work of the Food Safety and Inspection Service at USDA and the Food and Drug Administration. These agencies issue and enforce regulations not only governing the safety of food produced in the United States, but also those ensuring the safety of imported food.

For FDA, the executive order means that the agency will have to choose between regulations that ensure our drugs are effective against disease, medical devices aren't quack instruments, and food is safe for our children to eat any time it wants to issue a new regulation. This is mindless ideology trumping public health, and it will only enrich the worst companies in the food industry at the expense of American families who will find themselves at increased risk of exposure to contaminated food.

American consumers cannot tell a food product is contaminated by looking at it. Deadly pathogens like salmonella or listeria monocytogenes are invisible. Our food safety regulations are designed to protect the public from problems created when companies cut corners, make bad choices, or actually engage in misconduct to increase profits. The public has no way to detect these problems until they are injured or sickened by contaminated food.

The executive order is especially problematic because it does not take account of the benefits the public receives from regulations, but only looks at the costs borne by industry. For food safety, like so many other public health regulations, these benefits are literally a matter of life and death, as the victims of foodborne illness and their families can attest. Americans should not need to worry that an arbitrary, two-for-one, bean counting standard may increase their risk of exposure to a foodborne illness outbreak involving common foods like peanut butter, cantaloupe, pork, and cilantro.

The Safe Food Coalition is made up of consumer, public health and victim groups who work on issues related to food, and organizations representing labor in the food industry.

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