Support H.R. 2673 – The Consolidated Appropriations Act
Fully Funding the Government, Two-Year COOL Delay are Vital

During the week of January 19th, the Senate will vote on H.R. 2673, the Consolidated Appropriations Bill for FY2004. On behalf of the Food Marketing Institute (FMI) and your neighborhood supermarkets, I urge you to support passage of this vital piece of legislation.

H.R. 2673 fully funds 7 of the 13 cabinet departments and a number of independent agencies. This includes important spending on food safety and monitoring that is more important than ever in light of the recent outbreak of BSE ("Mad Cow Disease").

This legislation also includes a two-year delay in implementing mandatory country of origin labeling (COOL). COOL promises to be an expensive logistical nightmare that threatens long-established supply chains and commercial relationships. USDA estimates that the cost of implementing this program could be as high as $4 billion in the first year alone. It is clear the current law is fundamentally flawed and that Congress, industry, and consumers need additional time to create a workable program.

H.R. 2673 is a vital piece of legislation that needs to be completed. I urge you to support cloture and pass this bill. This will be a "Key Vote" for FMI in 2004. Thank you.

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