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*The Campaign to End Antibiotic Overuse*

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**Contact: Sean Crowley, (202) 478-6128 (w),  
202-550-6524 (c) or [scrowley@mrss.com](mailto:scrowley@mrss.com)**

## **100 Health, Consumer, Environmental Groups Urge Senators to Fix MUMS Bill to Avoid Worsening Antibiotic Resistance Crisis**

### ***Object to Streamlining Approval of Antibiotics for Use in Food-Producing Animals***

Washington, D.C. – More than 100 health, consumer, environmental and other groups sent a joint letter to U.S. Senators urging them to revise pending legislation so that the bill does not worsen the human crisis of bacteria becoming increasingly resistant to antibiotics. The bill, the Minor Use/Minor Species Act (MUMS, S. 741), authorizes FDA to conditionally approve (for up to 5½ years) - without full evidence of their efficacy - new antibiotic uses in "minor species" of animals (a category that includes fish and shellfish), and for "minor uses" in major species (a category that includes cattle, swine, chickens and turkeys).

"...[W]ider use of antibiotics in agriculture and aquaculture makes no sense at a time when antibiotic resistance is an emerging public health crisis," said the letter by the American Public Health Association, members of Keep Antibiotics Working, and other groups (see [www.KeepAntibioticsWorking.com](http://www.KeepAntibioticsWorking.com)) "...streamlin[ing] approvals of certain drugs for use in animals [should] not apply inappropriately to antibiotics for use in food-producing animals."

The Union of Concerned Scientists estimates that 70 percent of the antibiotics used in the U.S. – 24 million pounds each year – are given *without a prescription* to beef cattle, hogs, and poultry that are not sick for growth promotion and to compensate for cramped, unhealthy conditions on factory farms. More than half of these antibiotics are identical or nearly identical to medically important antibiotics in human medicine.

"The more widely that antibiotics are used, the more quickly resistance will arise and spread," concluded the letter. "Congress should be telling the FDA to apply more, not less, scrutiny to uses of antibiotics in agriculture and aquaculture. Unless the MUMS legislation contains an appropriate exclusion for antibiotics, we will oppose the bill."

Last month, the Institute of Medicine released a study, which concluded that the FDA should ban the use of antibiotics used in humans "for growth promotion in animals," because "Clearly, a decrease in [antibiotic] use in human medicine alone will have little effect on the current [antibiotic resistance] situation."

Last June, the respected medical journal, *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, published a two-year review of over 500 scientific studies about antibiotic resistance. It concluded that antibiotic use in agricultural animals "contributes to the growing problem of resistance in...human infections," which "limits treatment options, raises healthcare costs, and increases the number, severity and duration of infections."

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Keep Antibiotics Working ([www.KeepAntibioticsWorking.com](http://www.KeepAntibioticsWorking.com)) is a coalition of health, consumer, agricultural, environmental, humane and other advocacy groups with more than nine million members dedicated to eliminating a major cause of antibiotic resistance: the inappropriate use of antibiotics in food animals.