

March 5, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Thune
Senate Majority Whip
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Senate Minority Whip
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators McConnell, Schumer, Thune and Durbin:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing America's farmers, ranchers, state co-regulators, veterinarians and meat, poultry, and egg industries, we encourage you to swiftly bring to the Senate floor for confirmation the nomination of Dr. Mindy Brashears as Under Secretary of Food Safety.

Dr. Brashears is eminently qualified to fulfill the critical role of overseeing the safety of the nation's meat, poultry, and egg products. Prior to her nomination, Dr. Brashears served as a professor of food safety and public health at Texas Tech University. She is widely recognized as an international leader in pre- and post-harvest environments and their relation to foodborne pathogens. Additionally, Dr. Brashears has led global efforts to improve food safety and ensure food security in underserved areas.

For more than five years, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has not had a confirmed Under Secretary in the essential mission area of food safety. American consumers enjoy the safest and most secure food supply in the world and for a position vital to public trust to remain vacant for that period of time, particularly in light of the recent reshuffling of leadership at FSIS, is in no one's best interest.

Without a doubt, we believe Dr. Brashears is the best choice to fulfill this function. Her unique background and experience regarding food safety issues is unparalleled. Moreover, her work since assuming her duties as Deputy Under Secretary for Food Safety engaging with the regulated community, small and very small processing facilities, and consumer groups have shown her leadership on these issues.

For the foregoing reasons, the undersigned respectfully request Dr. Brashears' nomination expeditiously be brought forward for confirmation.

Respectfully submitted,

American Farm Bureau Federation
American Sheep Industry Association
American Veterinary Medical Association
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Cattlemen's Beef Association

National Chicken Council
National Pork Producers Council
National Turkey Federation
North American Meat Institute
United Egg Producers