

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 18, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

MEMORANDUM OF DISAPPROVAL

I have withheld my approval from H.R. 10073, "An Act to provide for the mandatory inspection of domesticated rabbits slaughtered for human food, and for other purposes."

This bill would make applicable to domesticated rabbits, with minor exceptions, the provisions of the Poultry Products Inspection Act. It would require the Secretary of Agriculture to implement a mandatory inspection program for all domesticated rabbit meat sold in commerce, with certain exemptions related to type and volume of operations.

It should be noted that the Food and Drug Administration now inspects rabbit meat to ensure that it complies with Federal pure food laws. Thus, there is no health protection reason for requiring mandatory Agriculture Department inspection of rabbit meat.

The effect of this Act would be to substitute a mandatory taxpayer-financed Agriculture Department inspection program for a voluntary one that is now provided under another law and paid for by the processors and consumers of rabbit meat. Since the voluntary program already provides a means for certifying wholesomeness to those consumers who demand such protection for this specialty food and are willing to pay for the protection, I do not believe that a mandatory program is wise public policy.

In addition, it is estimated that the cost to the taxpayer of government inspection provided by this Act could be more than ten cents per pound.

The limited benefit to be derived by a relative few consumers of rabbit meat cannot be justified in terms of the cost to the taxpayer. I am therefore not approving H.R. 10073.

GERALD R. FORD

THE WHITE HOUSE,

October 17, 1976.

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