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## Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Hearing on S. 3128, The National Uniformity for Food Act July 27, 2006

### Statement of Leslie G. Sarasin, Esq., CAE President & Chief Executive Officer, American Frozen Food Institute

The American Frozen Food Institute (AFFI) supports S. 3128, the *National Uniformity for Food Act of 2006*. S. 3128 would set uniform national food safety standards that will provide all Americans with the same high level of confidence in and protection with the nation's food supply.

On March 8, 2006, the House passed the bill (H.R. 4167) with a strong bipartisan vote of 283-139. Support from Committee members during the Senate HELP Committee hearing is absolutely critical to this legislation becoming law this session.

AFFI is the national trade association that promotes and represents the interests of all segments of the frozen food industry. The approximately 500 members of the Institute are engaged in the processing of frozen foods, as well as other functions in the frozen food supply chain. These functions include ingredient supply, cold storage, transportation, packaging, marketing and scientific research. The Institute fosters industry development and growth, advocates on behalf of the industry before legislative and regulatory entities, and provides additional value-added services for its members and for the benefit of consumers.

AFFI has consistently endorsed policy initiatives that facilitate the needs of its members while maintaining core consumer interests. *The National Uniformity for Food Act of 2006* is not only vital to frozen food manufacturers who engage in interstate commerce, but ensures the promotion of accurate and consistent food safety information for consumers.

The legislation provides for science-based uniform food safety standards and warning requirements so that Americans in every state are protected equally. It is common-sense legislation that will help consumers make educated decisions for themselves and their families in an ever-changing and confusing food labeling environment. Consumers deserve a single standard when it comes to food safety, and this bill will allow states and the Food and Drug Administration to work collaboratively in establishing sound food safety policies that benefit, rather than confuse, consumers.

*The National Uniformity for Food Act* is a top priority for the frozen food industry. In advocating this policy, AFFI is mindful of concerns that states should have the opportunity to establish policies according to their discretion based on local or regional issues. However, it is important to note that the legislation contains provisions that give states the ability to petition the federal government to seek variances from the Federal standard should there be a belief that a different requirement is necessary or appropriate. Furthermore, issues of interstate commerce are appropriate topics for federal policymaking.

AFFI is enthusiastic that *the National Uniformity for Food Act* is advancing and appreciates the Committee's consideration of this legislation, which clearly constitutes good public policy. AFFI urges its enactment.