



LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
25TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

June 14, 2013

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you travel to the G8 Summit this week, I ask you to pay close attention to the issues of antibiotic resistance that David Willets, Britain's science minister, has raised with his counterparts in the G8 countries. Earlier this week, Mr. Willett said, "Across the G8, we should regard the spread of antibiotic resistance as a global challenge that is up there with climate change, water stress and environmental damage, and there are genuine policy consequences that follow from that."

This is an issue of grave concern to me given my background in microbiology and public health, and it ought to be of concern to all of us who bear the responsibility for protecting the public. We are frittering away one of the greatest medical advancements of all time – the development of the antibiotic – by allowing its overuse on farms with otherwise healthy animals. Eighty percent of antibiotics sold in the U.S. are used in agriculture. Science has clearly demonstrated that this type of overuse of antibiotics contributes to the rise of resistant bacteria, and infections with these bacteria are costing the United States 70,000 lives each year. It is quite literally an issue of life and death.

I have been fighting this battle in Congress since 1999, and carrying legislation since 2007 – the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act – that would protect eight classes of antibiotics for human health while allowing the treatment of sick animals. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has taken steps to address the issue, since its 1977 recognition that the agricultural overuse of penicillin and tetracycline was contributing to the increase in resistance, but their current voluntary guidance advising the agricultural industry on the "judicious use" of antibiotics is not enough to protect our citizens.

As our friends and trading partners move forward with more aggressive countermeasures to address this growing public health crisis, I fear that America will find itself at a disadvantage that will impact not only our public health and the lives of our people, but also our ability to trade our products. I urge you to listen to your colleagues this week as this matter is discussed. I look forward to an open dialogue with you about the conversations and the next steps.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Louise M. Slaughter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress

Cc: Dr. John P. Holdren, Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy
The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary, Health and Human Services