

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

July 30, 2026

VIA EMAIL

Mr. Kyle Diamantas
Acting Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration
10903 New Hampshire Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20993

Dear Acting Commissioner Diamantas:

I write regarding the record-breaking cyclospora outbreak and the backroom dealing by the Trump Administration that may have delayed the government's response to a preventable public health crisis that has sickened thousands of Americans. The outbreak and subsequent cover up of its origins have eroded public trust in the food supply and created an unacceptable risk to public health. Accordingly, I request information and records from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regarding the ongoing investigation into the outbreak, and the influence of Taylor Farms on staffing and program cuts at the agency.

Recent reporting indicates that Taylor Farms—which last year donated \$1 million to a political action committee supporting President Trump—contacted the White House seeking to delay the recall of its tainted produce, and that the White House brought officials from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) onto the call.¹ According to former FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, there is no precedent for such intervention from the White House in the agency's management of food safety recalls.²

The call appears to have been facilitated by Trent Morse, a lobbyist who previously worked as a senior White House personnel official and is now working for Taylor Farms.³ This was not the first time that Taylor Farms has sought to use political connections to influence regulation of the industry in which it operates: Since the beginning of the second Trump

¹ Sabrina Siddiqi et al, *Taylor Farms Called White House to Try to Delay Cyclospora Recall*, WALL ST. J. (Jul. 24, 2026), <https://www.wsj.com/health/taylor-farms-cyclospora-recall-delay-call-41fef0bc>; Brett Stover, *Taylor Farms political donations questioned amid cyclosporiasis outbreak*, Fox40 (Jul. 21, 2026), <https://fox40.com/news/cyclosporiasis-outbreak/taylor-farms-political-donations-cyclosporiasis-outbreak/>.

² Transcript: Former FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb on "Face the Nation with Margaret Brennan, CBS NEWS (Jul. 26, 2026), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/scott-gottlieb-former-fda-commissioner-face-the-nation-transcript-july-26-2026/>.

³ Siddiqi et al, *supra* note 1.

Administration, the company has spent \$810,000 on lobbying regarding “regulation of food safety.”⁴

This appears to be the latest instance of a disturbing pattern I have previously raised with you: the Trump Administration’s willingness to let corporate financial interests undermine Americans’ health.⁵ But along with backroom dealing, the current outbreak has been handled with a lack of clarity that has left the American public understandably confused. According to FDA, the current cyclospora outbreak started on May 17, 2026, but the agency did not issue a public notice about it until July 16, 2026.⁶ FDA announced that Taylor Farms would voluntarily remove all iceberg lettuce sourced from central Mexico, but on July 19, 2026, FDA provided an update claiming the sample collected from Taylor Farms was a false positive.⁷ When Taylor Farms then announced that the agency had “apologized” for linking its produce to the outbreak, FDA quickly denied that it had done any such thing.⁸ Shortly thereafter, Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. of the Department of Health and Human Services said the outbreak was “under control” even as it continued to infect thousands of people and expand into additional states.⁹

The shifting information points to the ultimate culprit of this outbreak: the Trump Administration’s cuts to the federal government’s food safety programs. In March 2025, the Trump Administration cut \$11.4 billion in grants to state and local health departments, including the reduction of the program designed to actively monitor foodborne outbreaks, FoodNet.¹⁰ The cuts reduced Foodnet’s monitoring mandate from eight pathogens to just two, deliberately cutting the monitoring of cyclospora and requiring federal health agencies and the Department of Agriculture to rely on the passive reporting of state health departments alone.¹¹ The Trump Administration has delayed implementation of FDA’s Food Traceability Rule, which was intended to accelerate the agency’s ability to locate the source off foodborne illness outbreaks.¹² Safety inspections of foreign and domestic food manufacturers, already strained when the

⁴ Kate Taylor, *Taylor Farms Spent Big on MAGA and Anti-Regulatory Lobbying Before Diarrhea Outbreak*, WIRED, (Jul. 21, 2026), <https://www.wired.com/story/diarrhea-outbreak-taylor-farms-maga-donations-lobbying/>.

⁵ Letter from Sen. Richard Blumenthal et al to Kyle Diamantis, Acting Commissioner, Food and Drug Admin., May 15, 2026 (<https://www.blumenthal.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2026515lettertoFDAonfruitflavoredvapesauthorization.pdf>).

⁶ U.S. Food & Drug Admin., *Investigation of 9-State Outbreak of Cyclospora illnesses: iceberg Lett* (July 2026), <https://www.fda.gov/food/outbreaks-foodborne-illness/investigation-9-state-outbreak-cyclospora-illnesses-iceberg-lettuce-july-2026>, (last visited Jul. 29, 2026).

⁷ Angelica Peebles, *Cyclospora outbreak tests RFK Jr.’s promise to overhaul food system, rebuild trust in CDC*, CNBC, (Jul. 23, 2026), <https://www.cnbc.com/2026/07/23/cyclospora-outbreak-tests-rfk-jr-response-funding-cuts.html>.

⁸ Ellie Quinlan Houghtaling, *Taylor Farms Backtracks After Trying to Hide Role in Diarrhea Outbreak*, NEW REPUBLIC, (Jul. 21, 2026, at 4:26 PM), <https://newrepublic.com/post/213347/taylor-farms-yanks-fda-apologized-explosive-diarrhea>;

⁹ Aria Bendix, *RFK Jr. says cyclosporiasis outbreak is ‘under control’ as Mexico casts doubt on link to Taylor Farms Facility*, NBC NEWS, (Jul. 21, 2026), <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/rfk-jr-says-cyclosporiasis-outbreak-control-mexico-casts-doubt-link-ta-rcna588604>.

¹⁰ Jessica Glenza, *Michigan health officials identify ‘potential source’ of parasite outbreak*, The Guardian, (Jul. 13, 2026, at 7:55 PM), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/jul/13/cyclospora-outbreak-parasite-explosive-diarrhea>.

¹¹ Bendix, *supra* note 9.

¹² Peebles, *supra* note 7.

administration began, have likely fallen further since it terminated 3,500 FDA employees last year.¹³ The agency has struggled to replenish its ranks, even though it was well known that this season was likely to have high rates of cyclospora because of the increased risk of storms from climate change.¹⁴ Additionally, DOGE gutted the FDA's main press office, likely contributing to the gaps in communicating with the public about current outbreak.¹⁵

The severity of the outbreak indicates that, thanks to Trump Administration policies, FDA is simply unprepared to handle an outbreak of foodborne illness at this scale. In order for the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations to understand the outbreak's origins, spread, and the adequacy of the response of federal health agencies, please provide the following information and records by August 13, 2026:

1. All records¹⁶ regarding the FDA's response to the ongoing cyclospora outbreak.
2. All records since January 20, 2025, reflecting policies currently in place related to public communication of investigative findings regarding food-borne pathogens.
3. All communications between FDA officials and the White House, including the Executive Office of the President and the Domestic Policy Council, referring or related to the ongoing cyclospora outbreak and or/Taylor Farms.
4. All communications between FDA officials and Taylor Farms, referring or related to the ongoing cyclospora outbreak.

Please contact the Subcommittee if you have questions about the procedures for transmitting documents. Thank you for your attention to this request.

¹³ Kate Wells and Stephanie Armour, *Cyclospora Boosts Fears that Worse Foodborne Outbreaks Are Ahead*, KFF (Jul. 28, 2026), <https://kffhealthnews.org/public-health/cyclospora-outbreak-foodborne-monitoring-cdc-fda-trump-cuts-michigan/>.

¹⁴ *Dr. Scott Gottlieb on cyclospora outbreak: This is the largest outbreak we've seen in history*, CNBC (Jul. 27, 2026), <https://www.cnbc.com/video/2026/07/27/dr-scott-gottlieb-on-cyclospora-outbreak-this-is-the-largest-outbreak-weve-seen-in-history.html>.

¹⁵ Peebles, *supra* note 7.

¹⁶ "Records" include written, recorded, or graphic material of any kind, including letters, memoranda, reports, notes, electronic data (emails, email attachments, Signal, WhatsApp, or other encrypted messages, and any other electronically-created or stored information), calendar entries, inter-office communications, meeting minutes, phone/voice mail or recordings/records of verbal communications, and drafts (whether or not they resulted in final documents).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Richard Blumenthal". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" and last name "Blumenthal" clearly legible.

Richard Blumenthal
Ranking Member
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

cc: The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman