

Food Safety News Presented by Marler Clark LLP, PS.

House GOP Proposal Seeks \$285 Million in FDA Cuts

by [News Desk](#) | May 24, 2011

A new budget proposal put forth by House Republicans Monday would cut the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's budget for Fiscal Year 2012 by \$285 million, an 11.5 percent reduction from FY 2011, just as the agency moves to implement an ambitious [new food safety law](#).

The draft budget [legislation](#), unveiled by the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, cuts \$2.6 in discretionary spending, which is over \$5 billion below the President's FY 2012 budget request for the programs under the purview of the subcommittee.

"As is the goal of all our Appropriations bills this year, this legislation reflects hard decisions to cut lower priority programs, reduce spending in programs that can be scaled back, and target funds where they are needed most so that our nation continues on the path to fiscal recovery," said House Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers in a statement.

Subcommittee Chairman Jack Kingston (R-GA), who has recently questioned the push for greater resources at FDA, emphasized the need for significant cuts.

"America is at a crossroads," said Kingston. "For every dollar the Federal government spends, 42 cents is borrowed. The gross national debt is now 97 percent of GDP and we are rapidly becoming the next Greece, Spain, or Portugal. Internationally, this weakens our standing as a global leader and our lenders such as China may seek to restructure our debt if we don't take care of it ourselves."

"For our part, the Agriculture Subcommittee has sought to begin making some of the tough choices necessary to right the ship," added Kingston. "We have taken spending to below pre-stimulus, pre-bailout levels while ensuring USDA, FDA, CFTC and other agencies are provided the necessary resources to fulfill their duties.

Kingston said the plan balances the "urgent need for fiscal restraint" with the "necessity of a safe and abundant supply of food and life-saving medications."

Deputy Commissioner for Foods at FDA, Michael Taylor, recently told a public health audience in Washington, D.C., the agency will need funding increases to meet the mandate set forth in the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act, which President Obama signed into law in January.

"There's no question that to implement what really is a whole new food safety system that Congress has outlined in this law we've got to make some investments above our current funding," said Taylor during a policy address at George Washington University last Thursday. "It does mean getting some meaningful increases over the next few years to get our base up above where it is today."

The proposal would also reduce the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service budget by \$35 million. A release by the subcommittee notes that the proposed funding level "will continue critical meat, poultry, and egg product inspection and testing activities, and supports an expansion of a poultry inspection pilot project that will lead to improving food safety."

