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October 13, 2021

The Honorable Phyllis K. Fong
Inspector General
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Room 117-W Jamie Whitten Bldg.
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Inspector General Fong:

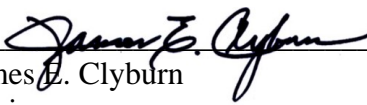
A Select Subcommittee investigation of the Farmers to Families Food Box Program (Food Box Program or Program) administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has found that the Program was operated in a manner that created significant risks of fraud, waste, and abuse. More details about the Select Subcommittee's findings are available in the enclosed staff report. I write today to request that the Office of Inspector General (OIG), in addition to completing its ongoing review of the Program, undertake further work to reclaim wasted funds for American taxpayers and help mitigate future risks. Specifically, I ask that OIG evaluate (1) contract performance, including a review for potential fraud or inefficiencies by contractors in the Program; and (2) the adequacy of contractor vetting and of guidance provided by USDA Program administrators.

I request that OIG publish the findings of its review, along with recommendations for reforms to safeguard future crisis response programs from waste and fraud and to improve food distribution programs administered by USDA. The enclosed report includes multiple examples of invoices paid by USDA to Food Box Program contractors that may be inflated and/or are supported by inaccurate documentation. If the investigation determines funds were inappropriately paid to Food Box Program contractors, USDA should request that those funds be returned to taxpayers. We also request that OIG refer any evidence of fraud or other unlawful activities that it uncovers during its review to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

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If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Select Subcommittee staff at (202) 225-4400. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,


James E. Clyburn
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Steve Scalise, Ranking Member