

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## ESSJM 8010

---

---

As Passed Senate, March 8, 2005

**Brief Description:** Petitioning the United States Department of Agriculture to delay plans to reopen the border to Canadian cattle and beef products.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Agriculture & Rural Economic Development (originally sponsored by Senators Rasmussen, Schoesler, Sheldon, Franklin, Roach, Spanel, Deccio, McAuliffe, Shin, Haugen, Prentice, Fairley, Rockefeller, Mulliken and Morton).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 2/1/05, 2/8/05 [DPS].  
Passed Senate: 3/8/05, 42-4.

---

### SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Joint Memorial No. 8010 be substituted therefor, and the substitute joint memorial do pass.

Signed by Senators Rasmussen, Chair; Shin, Vice Chair; Schoesler, Ranking Minority Member; Delvin, Jacobsen, Morton and Sheldon.

**Staff:** Bob Lee (786-7404)

**Background:** On January 4, 2005, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) proposed a rule to reopen its border effective on March 7, 2005 to the importation of Canadian live cattle and processed beef products. Shortly thereafter, on January 11th, Canada announced that another cow in Canada tested positive for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). In response, the USDA announced that it would send a technical team to Canada to investigate the circumstances that resulted in this additional infection.

Many foreign markets to U.S. beef products were closed due to the discovery on December 23, 2004, of one cow with BSE in the United States. These foreign markets have yet to reopen. The origin of this animal was Canada.

**Summary of Bill:** The United States Department of Agriculture is requested to delay moving forward with its plan to reopen the border to Canadian cattle and beef products until there is broad international acceptance of the science used by the United States Department of Agriculture by foreign countries that have banned the importation of beef from the United States, as demonstrated by the simultaneous reopening of their markets to the importation of United States beef.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Testimony For:** There are a number of concerns that the livestock industry has to the proposed federal action to reopen the United States to the importation of cattle and beef products from Canada. There is opposition to importing cattle that are over 30 months of age. There is concern: as to how the identification of these cattle will be verified; whether the imported animals will be vaccinated or will carry livestock diseases including brucellosis, tuberculosis and anaplasmosis; whether the sudden increase in imports will be done in a way to minimize market disruption; what the status of feeder heifers will be; whether these animals will be placed in quarantine status to assure contagious diseases are not spread; and that imported animal arrive at their proper destinations.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Who Testified:** PRO: Jack Field, Washington Cattlemen's Association.

**House Amendment(s):** The United States Department of Agriculture is requested to: (1) reaffirm to Congress and the courts that the rule to lift the limited ban on importing Canadian beef be based on sound scientific proof so that consumer safety and animal health of the United States will be maintained; and (2) redouble efforts to conclude negotiations with trading partners to reestablish critical export markets for U.S. produced beef be based on the same sound science.

House Passed: 94-2.