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**Congress of the United States
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PLEASE RESPOND TO:

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June 15, 2016

The Honorable R. Gil Kerlikowske
Commissioner
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20229

Dear Commissioner Kerlikowske:

I write to follow up on a letter sent to your office on December 10, 2015, that called your attention to media reports and other evidence indicating a possibility that some goods manufactured in China and imported to the United States may contain leather made from dogs.

As you know, in 2000, the United States instituted a ban on the importation of dog fur and skin. Many American consumers are understandably distressed at the thought that the gloves, jackets, other accessories they purchase from Chinese manufacturers may be constructed in whole or in part from dogs.

I was encouraged to see that the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) web page for travelers describes "Prohibited and Restricted Items," which includes a section that informs consumers that dog and cat fur is unlawful to import into the United States. It specifically states:

"It is illegal in the United States to import, export, distribute, transport, manufacture or sell products containing dog or cat fur in the United States. As of November 9, 2000, the Dog and Cat Protection Act of 2000 calls for the seizure and forfeiture of each item containing dog or cat fur.

The Act provides that any person who violates any provision may be assessed a civil penalty of not more than \$10,000 for each separate knowing and intentional violation, \$5,000 for each separate gross negligent violation, or \$3,000 for each separate negligent violation."

I am interested to know what your agency is doing to ensure that dog and cat leather does not make it into this country, including any current plans to update relevant agency web pages to educate consumers and travelers about this issue.

Furthermore, while the *Dog and Cat Protection Act* does not prohibit the importation of dog and cat leather products without fur, such products may enter the U.S. mislabeled as another type of leather. Therefore, I urge you to conduct random testing of leather products that enter the U.S. to assure the leather is not mislabeled.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter. I look forward to a prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alcee L. Hastings". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress