WHEREAS, the treatment, prevention and control of animal disease is critically important to the health and welfare of animals and the safety of the food produced; and

WHEREAS, the availability of antibiotics is a critical tool for veterinarians, livestock and poultry producers to ensure animal health and the safety of the US food supply; and

WHEREAS, the use of antibiotics both therapeutically and sub-therapeutically has a long history of success in improving animal health and welfare; and

WHEREAS, general and species-specific judicious-use guidelines already exist and are being implemented on a routine basis. The guidelines were developed by the American Veterinary Medical Association, with the assistance of the American Association of Swine Veterinarians, American Association of Avian Pathologists, American Association of Bovine Practitioners, American Association of Equine Practitioners, the American Association of Feline Practitioners, and the American Animal Hospital Association, as well as the Center for Disease Control and Prevention; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of the modern animal production practices have resulted in continuing reduction in the use of sub-therapeutic antibiotics in feed and water; and

WHEREAS, according to CDC, about 40 percent of antibiotics used in the U.S. are administered to animals, about 87 percent of the total of antibiotics used in food animals are used therapeutically to treat, control and prevent disease; and

WHEREAS, there is a widespread agreement that the resistance in humans is the result of community-and hospital-acquired infections. Multi-resistant Mycobacterium tuberculosis, penicillin-resistant Streptococcus pneumoniae, methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus are all recognized as public health threats but there has been no indication that their resistance is connected to animal administration or antibiotics; and

WHEREAS, recent surveillance data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention shows the incidence of resistant food borne bacteria in humans has declined over the 5-6 year period of surveillance. Additional data from CDC demonstrate the incidence of food borne illness has declined 23 percent since 1996. Recently released data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture show dramatic declines in the incidence of food borne bacteria in ground meats since 1998. Taken together, these sets of government data are a demonstration that the potential of animal antibiotic use contributing to the incidence of resistant bacteria in humans is almost non-existent; and

WHEREAS, market forces, driven by consumer demands are resulting in pressure from the livestock processing industry for more prudent use of antibiotics in animals; and

WHEREAS, an effective response to the public health threat of antibiotic resistance requires a broad-based approach that encompasses all aspects, including human. It also requires cooperation between the public and private sectors and will require international communication; and

WHEREAS, a federal interagency Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance developed a Public Health Action Plan to combat Antimicrobial Resistance that recommends a broad response to the issue and focuses on surveillance, prevention and control and additional research; and to

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that The American Legislative Exchange Council supports the use of science-based data to assess whether sub-therapeutic antibiotics cause antibiotic resistance problems.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the American Legislative Exchange Council opposes legislative or regulatory action that may result in unnecessary additional restrictions on the use of antibiotics in animal agriculture that are not based on ground science.
