



January 3, 2020

The Honorable Chris Murphy
136 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Passage of the *Kay Hagan Tick Act*

Dear Senator Murphy,

On behalf of the Entomological Society of America (ESA), I write to express our gratitude for your support of the *Kay Hagan Tick Act* which will assist in combatting the escalating burden of vector-borne disease (VBD). ESA is an organization of more than 7,000 entomologists, including scientists in academia, industry, and the federal government, pest management specialists, and even amateur enthusiasts who all work together to support, promote, and advance the discipline.

VBD represents a growing threat to American health and security. Between 2004 and 2016, reported human disease cases in the U.S. resulting from bites from arthropod vectors—primarily ticks and mosquitoes—tripled, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).¹ Meanwhile, nine new diseases spread by ticks and mosquitoes were discovered or introduced in that same timeframe. Disease vectors also pose significant threats to livestock and companion animals. The underlying causes for these trends are varying and complex, and so are the potential solutions.

The passage of the *Kay Hagan Tick Act*, included as part of the FY 2020 appropriations minibuss, represents a positive step toward addressing the myriad challenges posed by VBD. The legislation will strengthen the coordination of activities across the Department of Health and Human Services and its agency partners; develop and maintain a national plan for responding to VBD; reauthorize the CDC Regional Centers of Excellence in Vector-Borne Disease for five years; and authorize a cooperative agreement through CDC to support state health department efforts to improve surveillance, diagnosis, and education for VBD. All of these advancements will allow those in entomological professions to better track, control, and reduce the spread of VBD in the United States.

On behalf of our members and others who are invested in the mission to reduce the public health and economic risks posed by ticks and mosquitoes, we thank you for your commitment to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. K. Peterson", written in a cursive style.

Robert K. D. Peterson, Ph.D.
Science Policy Committee Chair and 2019 President, Entomological Society of America
Professor of Entomology, Montana State University

¹ CDC Vital Signs, May 2018: <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/vector-borne/index.html>