

May 22, 2019

The Honorable Susan Collins
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-1904



Re: Stakeholder Support for Bill on Vector-Borne Disease Management

Dear Senator Collins,

On behalf of the Vector-Borne Disease Network and allied organizations, we the undersigned write to articulate our support for the objectives of “Ticks: Identify, Control, and Knockout Act” or the “TICK Act,” which aims to combat the escalating burden of VBD. The Vector-Borne Disease Network is a new stakeholder group of non-profit organizations led by the Entomological Society of America (ESA) that aims to reduce human and animal suffering caused by arthropod disease vectors.

Illnesses such as Lyme disease, Zika virus, Malaria, and West Nile virus are transmitted by vector organisms, primarily blood-feeding insects or arthropods. Vectors ingest disease-causing germs when biting an infected human or animal and later inject them into a new host during a subsequent bite.

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

Due to all the challenges mentioned above, and the growing threat to American health and security posed by vector-borne disease (VBD), the Vector-Borne Disease Network is pleased to see new legislation that aims to establish an Office of Oversight and Coordination for VBD within the Department of Health and Human Services to promote interagency coordination; develop and maintain a national plan for responding to VBD; reauthorize the CDC Regional Centers of Excellence in VBD for five years; and authorize a cooperative agreement through CDC to support state health department efforts to improve management, surveillance, diagnosis, and education.

On behalf of this coalition of stakeholders 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,

American Mosquito Control Association
Anastasia Mosquito Control District of St. Johns County (FL)
Associated Executives of Mosquito Control Work in New Jersey
Drexel University, College of Medicine

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

Entomological Society of America
Colorado Tick-Borne Disease Awareness Association
College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Georgia Mosquito Control Association
Hudson Valley Lyme Disease Association
Lyme Association of Greater Kansas City, Inc.
Midwest Center of Excellence for Vector Borne Disease
National Association of Vector-Borne Disease Control Officials
National Pest Management Association
New Jersey Mosquito Control Association
North Fork Deer Management Alliance
Northeast Regional Center for Excellence in Vector Borne Diseases
Pacific Southwest Center of Excellence in Vector-Borne Diseases
School of Veterinary Medicine at UW-Madison
Southeastern Regional Center of Excellence in Vector Borne Diseases
The New Jersey State Mosquito Control Commission
Tickborne Disease Prevention Laboratory, Western Connecticut State University
University of Miami Miller School of Medicine
University of Rhode Island Center for Vector-Borne Disease
University of Rhode Island TickEncounter Resource Center
US Biologic
Warren County Mosquito Control Commission (NJ)
Western Gulf Center of Excellence for Vector-borne Diseases