



VECTOR-BORNE  
DISEASE NETWORK

November 17, 2020

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
260 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
2413 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
2207 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Blunt, Ranking Member Murray, Chairwoman DeLauro, and Ranking Member Cole,

Given today's rising challenges to public health, we must ensure that critical investments are made to safeguard our country from serious disease, including vector-borne threats, and strengthen our nation's public health preparedness. The Vector-Borne Disease Network (VBDN) is a coalition of non-profit organizations, committed to addressing the public health and economic challenges posed by vector-borne diseases, and as such support strong funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Vector-Borne Disease efforts.

The emergence and rapid spread of COVID-19 demonstrates how the absence of a unified plan has compromised our nation's efforts to protect public health. For the protection of the populace through the prevention and control of vector-transmitted diseases, vital resources are needed more than ever to support existing state, county, district, or municipal vector control programs. Such critical efforts are needed for the discovery of diagnostic tools, identification of emerging vectors and diseases, research to foster new vector control technologies, and laboratory building to support arbovirus-related programs and activities to safeguard public welfare.

Due to the pandemic, many vital resources have been redirected to respond to COVID-19, leaving communities vulnerable to lack of critical vector control testing, surveillance, and control measures. Toward this end, the CDC Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) and Division of Vector-Borne Diseases program funding is critical. Last year the CDC was only able to fund one-third of ELC grants requested by the states to address vector-borne disease prevention, surveillance, and management. This makes sustainable retention of highly qualified entomologists and epidemiologists, who play a critical role in the vector surveillance and management, challenging.

**To ensure that public health challenges can be effectively met, public health and vector-control professionals must be equipped with the resources and capacity necessary for the prevention, treatment, and control of vector-borne diseases. Toward that end, we seek full and robust funding in the fiscal year (FY) 2021 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, as well as any anticipated Stimulus Package, for CDC's National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases Division of Vector-Borne Diseases (DVBD) and emerging infections through the Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for Infectious Diseases Cooperative Agreement (ELC).**

The VBDN supports fully funding the recent health preparedness measures enacted by Congress last year including the Kay Hagan Tick Act (PL: 116-94) for a national strategy for vector borne diseases, support for the regional Centers of Excellence on Vector-Borne Disease, and resources to increase capacity to identify report, prevent, and respond to such diseases, as well as the Strengthening Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health (SMASH) Act (PL: 116-22) in support of programs for vector-borne diseases surveillance and control. The President's Budget Request for FY 2021 included \$66.2 million for the DVBD and this coalition supports a total of \$96.2 million for the DVBD to fully fund the Kay Hagan Tick Act. Full funding of the SMASH Act is also requested.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has brought the need for public health preparedness into sharp focus, and our ability to protect and safeguard our country from serious diseases, including vector-borne threats. Thank you very much, your consideration is appreciated.

Sincerely,

American Mosquito Control Association  
American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene  
Association of Public Health Laboratories  
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials  
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists  
Entomological Society of America  
Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory  
Georgia Mosquito Control Association  
Global Vector Hub  
Infectious Diseases Society of America  
Lee County Mosquito & Hyacinth Control Districts  
Midwest Center of Excellence for Vector-Borne Disease  
Minnesota Department of Health  
Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Association of Vector-Borne Control Officials

National Environmental Health Association  
National Pest Management Association  
North Carolina Mosquito and Vector Control Association  
Northeast Regional Center for Excellence in Vector-Borne Diseases  
Pacific Southwest Center of Excellence in Vector-Borne Diseases  
Puerto Rico Vector Control Unit  
Society for Vector Ecology  
Southeastern Regional Center of Excellence in Vector-Borne Diseases  
The New Jersey State Mosquito Control Commission  
TickEncounter Resource Center, University of Rhode Island  
Western Gulf Center of Excellence for Vector-Borne Diseases

Cc: Members - Senate Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee  
House Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee