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CAPT Richard Henry  
Office of HIV/AIDS and Infectious Disease Policy  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
330 C Street SW, Room L001  
Washington DC 20201

Dear Captain Henry,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the more than 6,000 members of the Entomological Society of America (ESA) regarding the Announcement of Intent To Establish the Tick-Borne Disease Working Group and Solicitation of Nominations for Appointment to the Working Group Membership (Document Number: 2017-14965). I am writing to nominate Dr. Thomas Mather from the University of Rhode Island to serve on this Working Group.

Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Powassan, babesiosis, and the other diseases transmitted by ticks are an economic threat to the United States. Estimates for Lyme disease alone are between \$.7 and \$1.3 billion in direct medical costs for the more than 300,000 cases reported each year. The management of tick-borne diseases starts with the management of ticks. ESA has long-called for an integrated tick management approach to reducing the disease burden on human and animal health. It is essential that the vector management community has strong representation on the Working Group. The selection of Dr. Mather to serve would be an excellent place to start.

As you can see from his attached CV and statement, Dr. Mather is one of the world's foremost experts on ticks and tick-borne diseases. He has published more than a hundred research papers in a wide range of peer-reviewed publications with funding from a wide range of local, state, and federal sources, including the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Science Foundation (NSF), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), U.S. Army, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). He has presented at dozens of academic meetings and public fora on ticks and the threats they pose and holds patents related to several different methods and products related tick-borne disease prevention and intervention. Due to his extensive knowledge, expertise, and creative thinking, he is frequently asked to consult and serve on various state commissions seeking to address Lyme disease.

In addition to his esteemed academic research career, he founded the TickEncounter Resource Center (TERC) which is now one of the nation's most-visited outreach resources on tick education, focusing on tick-bite protection for tick-borne disease prevention. TERC allows him to connect his academic expertise with his passion for civic responsibility and empowering communities through awareness, employing a variety of strategies to increase efficiencies while operating with limited resources to effectively address the tick problem at both regional and global levels.

Dr. Mather has also been an active, decades-long member of ESA and has been a helpful resource when called on by the society to assist with his subject-matter expertise. He was appointed to serve as a member of the writing team that drafted ESA's position statement on ticks and tick-borne diseases and was instrumental in developing the March 2016 Integrated Tick Management Summit that the CDC co-hosted with ESA and the IPM Institute. We can speak firsthand to his gracious participation in strategizing and executing objectives, as well as his ability to provide constructive feedback while serving in various committee settings.

I respectfully ask you to consider and support Dr. Mather's nomination to the Working Group.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan J. Weller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "S" and "W".

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