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The Honorable Senator Angus King
United States Senate
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

April 19, 2017

Dear Senator King,

As President of the Entomological Society of America (ESA), I am writing to you on behalf of our more than 6,000 members to express our support for your new piece of legislation, the Strengthening Mosquito Abatement Safety and Health (SMASH) Act of 2017. We enthusiastically offer our endorsement of this important and timely bipartisan bill.

The primary mosquito species capable of transmitting the Zika virus are distributed throughout much of the nation. As travelers continue to bring the virus home from overseas, all required elements for a major outbreak of Zika virus in the United States are in place. Controlling the mosquitoes that transmit the Zika virus is an immediate and cost-effective action that can be taken to reduce the likelihood of an outbreak within our borders. The SMASH Act will facilitate mosquito control in four important ways: supporting local government efforts in vector control by authorizing matching federal funds to complement local efforts; building capacity through the CDC Enhanced Laboratory Capacity program; assisting with data collection efforts for already registered vector control pesticides; and enhancing data collection for new vector control products. This comprehensive approach is exactly the strategy needed to manage this threat and to maximize the probability of averting a major health crisis.

Passage of the SMASH Act would also authorize funds for a more sustainable and comprehensive approach to vector management. Based on decades of entomological science and practice, ESA recognizes the value of this investment, both to reduce the immediate threat of Zika and to provide proactive protection against emerging mosquito-borne diseases that have yet to cross our borders.

ESA welcomes the opportunity to provide additional scientific consultation to your office, or to any other that may require entomological expertise to devise or assess policy. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can be of assistance.

Thank you again for your attention to and your thoughtful and decisive action on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Susan J. Weller, Ph.D.
President, ESA