

March 6, 2020

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
136 Dirksen 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
Room S-146A, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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

On behalf of the Vector-Borne Disease Network, we the undersigned organizations write to express our strong support for efforts related to vector-borne diseases (VBD) at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). **We urge you to provide at least \$8.3 billion for CDC in the fiscal year (FY) 2021 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriations bills, with full funding for VBD efforts authorized by the *Kay Hagan TICK Act* and the *Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation Act*.** We are grateful for strong Congressional support for VBD programs in recent years and believe that ongoing investments in this area are crucial for combatting 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. Many notorious public health threats, such as Lyme disease, Zika virus, malaria, and West Nile virus, are transmitted by arthropod vectors like ticks and mosquitoes. Between 2004 and 2016, reported human disease cases in the U.S. resulting from bites from arthropod vectors tripled.¹ Meanwhile, nine new pathogens 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. Because both the underlying causes of and potential solutions for these trends are varying and complex, robust and dedicated funding for addressing challenges in VBD is needed now more than ever.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/vector-borne/index.html>

Our coalition applauds the recent passage of the *Kay Hagan TICK Act* and the *Pandemic and All Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation Act*, which in Section 607, Strengthening Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health (SMASH), details support for important mosquito abatement activities, as positive steps towards tackling the public health and economic risks posed by VBD. Providing the full level of funding authorized by these important pieces of legislation would be highly effective in facilitating the development and implementation of a national strategy to combat VBD. As your subcommittees consider FY 2021 funding levels for CDC, the Vector-Borne Disease Network encourages you to include **at least \$66.195 million in funding for the CDC's Division of Vector-Borne Diseases (DVBD)**, as was proposed in the President's Budget Request for FY 2021, to support VBD prevention, surveillance, testing, and response activities.

Full funding for the **CDC Regional Centers of Excellence in Vector-Borne Diseases** is important to support this novel program which increases the coordination between academic institutions and state and local departments of health to ensure research findings and information are getting out into the community more rapidly, support surveillance efforts, and promote outreach and education. The *Kay Hagan TICK Act* authorized the program at **\$10 million per year** which supports five centers across the country.

The **CDC Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) grant program** is particularly important for efforts related to the surveillance, detection, response, and prevention of infectious diseases, including VBD. Last year the CDC's DVBD received requests for nearly \$50 million from the state departments of health for VBD through the ELC program. However, the DVBD was only able to support \$18.2 million, roughly a third of the needed resources to address VBD across the nation. The *Kay Hagan TICK ACT* authorizes **\$20 million** and that still won't come close to meeting needs at the state level.

CDC is the first line of defense for our nation's health, safety, and security, and it is crucial that the agency has the resources it needs to protect Americans from serious threats like VBD. On behalf of our coalition of stakeholders invested in the mission to reduce the ongoing as well as emerging threats posed by ticks, mosquitoes, and other arthropod vectors, we thank you for your commitment to this critical issue.

Sincerely,

American Mosquito Control Association
American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene
Association of Public Health Laboratories
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists
Entomological Society of America
Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory
Georgia Mosquito Control Association
Infectious Disease Society of America
Midwest Center of Excellence for Vector-Borne Disease
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
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