

February 16, 2023

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tina Smith
720 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Grassley and Smith:

We, the undersigned groups, write today to thank you for introducing the Healthy Dog Importation Act, which addresses the current gaps in oversight and prioritizes the prevention of disease introduction from imported dogs that threatens both animal and public health. These gaps were highlighted by recent actions by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to ban imports of dogs from 113 countries and by USDA to add requirements for dogs arriving from countries affected by African Swine Fever. Unfortunately, even with these temporary emergency regulations to protect U.S. human and animal health, more than 90 percent of imported dogs enter the country with minimal oversight by the U.S. government.

In the absence of proper health requirements, imported dogs have been responsible for the introduction and transmission of diseases and pests into the U.S., including rabies, canine influenza, leptospirosis, melioidosis, onchocercosis and screwworm. There is also a growing concern amongst the producer groups that imported dogs and even their crates and bedding could transfer a foreign animal disease that will devastate the U.S. livestock industry.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 6 out of every 10 known human infectious diseases, including 75 percent of new diseases discovered in the last decade, are zoonotic in origin. Despite this, the U.S. lacks even the most basic health requirements such as proper veterinary care prior to transporting a canine, appropriate identification and vaccination of dogs before arrival in the U.S., and strong coordination between the federal agencies that oversee animal and public health. Our system falls far short of those of other developed countries, who have stringent requirements for the movement of and importation of all animals.

We thank you for the Healthy Dog Importation Act, which addresses the current gaps in oversight and prioritizes the prevention of disease introduction from imported dogs that threatens both animal and public health. We look forward to working with you to ensure this bipartisan bill is enacted as a standalone bill or part of the 2023 Farm Bill.

Sincerely,

Alaska Veterinary Medical Association
American Association of Bovine Practitioners
American Association of Swine Veterinarians
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American Kennel Club
American Pet Products Association
American Sheep Industry Association

American Veterinary Medical Association
Animal Health Institute
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association
Delaware Veterinary Medical Association
District of Columbia Veterinary Medical Association
Georgia Veterinary Medical Association
International Pet and Animal Transportation Association
Iowa Veterinary Medical Association
Kansas Veterinary Medical Association
Louisiana Veterinary Medical Association
Maryland Veterinary Medical Association
Master of Foxhounds Association of America
Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association
Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association
Missouri Veterinary Medical Association
National Animal Interest Alliance
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Pork Producers Council
Nebraska Veterinary Medical Association
Nevada Veterinary Medical Association
New Hampshire Veterinary Medical Association
New York Veterinary Medical Association
North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association
Ohio Veterinary Medical Association
Pet Advocacy Network
Pet Food Institute
Protect the Harvest
Puerto Rico Veterinary Medical Association
Rhode Island Veterinary Medical Association
South Carolina Veterinary Medical Association
Sportsmen's Alliance
Utah Veterinary Medical Association
Vermont Veterinary Medical Association
Virginia Veterinary Medical Association
Washington Veterinary Medical Association
Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association
World Pet Association