

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 31, 2015

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

Thank you for your efforts to combat the spread of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). We look forward to working with USDA to ensure the necessary resources are available as you tackle this massive outbreak and the challenges that lay ahead.

Conservative estimates put the economy-wide loss for destroyed production due to HPAI at nearly \$3.3 billion. Not only do farms lose infected birds, but the rest of their flock as well. Poultry and egg barns need to be disinfected over a period of time, meaning barns will sit empty and poultry and egg production will further decrease.

While losses to turkey, chicken and egg producers are the most visible, the impact of HPAI can be felt across the entire economy. With fewer birds going to market and potential delays in restocking of farms, farmers will spend less on traditional input purchases, such as feed and veterinary supplies. Farmers and their employees will also have less household income to spend at local businesses. Additionally, trade has been cut off by international partners concerned about the devastating effects of this disease, directing more than \$1 billion in poultry products to other markets, all at a cost to farmers. These are the ripple effects of avian influenza.

Therefore, on behalf of our farmer and business constituents impacted by this year's HPAI outbreak, we ask your continued assistance in three key areas:

- 1) Complete biosecurity research in a timely manner to ensure industry can take any immediate steps before the fall. This critical research will help make sure that any financial requirements by industry, and certainly the federal government, are practices that are based on science, will improve biosecurity and reduce the impact of this disease on farmers, communities and consumers.
- 2) Complete bilateral trade talks with key international partners to ensure that any vaccine usage will not harm export sales.
- 3) Complete research and development of a viable commercial vaccine, so that it is available for fall should it be needed. We applaud USDA for its ongoing work on vaccine development.

As we move toward the fall, we stand ready to assist USDA and our poultry industry in trying to mitigate the negative impacts of HPAI on the economy. Again, we commend USDA for its coordination and dedication in responding to this massive outbreak and the current efforts to minimize the impacts that HPAI could have on our communities in the future.

Sincerely,



Collin C. Peterson  
Member of Congress



David Rouzer  
Member of Congress



Jim Costa  
Member of Congress



Tim Walz  
Member of Congress



Kevin Cramer  
Member of Congress



Richard Nolan  
Member of Congress



John Kline  
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress



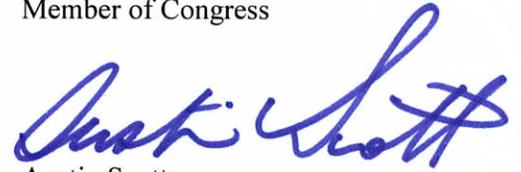
Ron Kind  
Member of Congress



Walter B. Jones  
Member of Congress



Vicky Hartzler  
Member of Congress



Austin Scott  
Member of Congress



Richard Hudson  
Member of Congress



Rob Woodall  
Member of Congress



Mick Mulvaney  
Member of Congress



Rick Crawford  
Member of Congress



Jackie Walorski  
Member of Congress



Rodney Davis  
Member of Congress



Jeff Denham  
Member of Congress



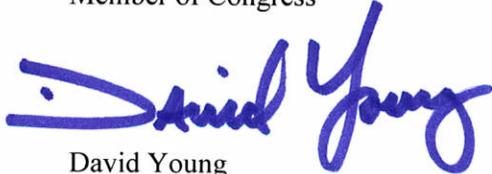
Kristi Noem  
Member of Congress



Bob Goodlatte  
Member of Congress



Bob Gibbs  
Member of Congress



David Young  
Member of Congress



Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



Renee Ellmers  
Member of Congress



Rod Blum  
Member of Congress



Ralph Abraham  
Member of Congress



David Loeb sack  
Member of Congress



Robert E. Latta  
Member of Congress