

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 24, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump,

We write to express our concern with recent actions your Administration has taken directly harming the federal response to H5N1 avian influenza and because of the new D1.1 variant of H5N1, that has circulated widely in birds, now being identified in cattle in for the first time. This variant was not previously known to be possible in cattle.

This spillover event is an alarming development, most likely signaling a new chapter in this outbreak. Your Administration's gag order pausing external health communications from federal health agencies, and limitation of cross-agency calls and collaboration to share information regarding this outbreak has significantly hampered response efforts to prevent the spread of the H5N1.

As of today, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported that there are [70 human cases](#) of H5N1 and one associated death, with farmworkers in close quarters with livestock and poultry being particularly vulnerable to H5N1 infection. There are currently 973 dairy herds affected across 16 states, and every state has detected H5N1 in birds and poultry, affecting over 12,000 wild birds and over 162 million poultry. This does not represent the full scope of this outbreak, given data is mainly collected from farmers that agree to take part in surveillance and testing.

So far, human H5N1 infections have largely led to mild illnesses, however, the two cases of severe illness in North America were associated with this new variant, including a Louisiana resident who caught the virus from backyard flocks and died, and a British Columbia teen who was in critical condition.

Your Administration must act quickly to address this crisis. Viruses will not wait for this Administration to lift its gag order or for agencies to restart their collaboration and information sharing before they spread or mutate. It is clear that these interfering short-sighted actions by your Administration will cause significant harm. This interference must end.

Just last week, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) confirmed that it fired several agency employees working on the federal response to H5N1. The Administration "prioritizing" their bird flu response and firing of federal employees actively working on this worsening outbreak cannot both coexist.

The CDC issues weekly reports of emerging science, titled the [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report \(MMWR\)](#), to inform issues like the ongoing H5N1 outbreak. The MMWR has been published consistently every week since 1982, including regular updates throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The Administration's gag order halted the MMWR weekly report scheduled for January 23, and it was finally released on February 6. Since the announcement of the gag order, some reports have been withheld and/or subject to a delayed release schedule, raising concerns that information is being improperly bottlenecked or - even worse - withheld for inappropriate purposes.

**Will your Administration commit to allowing the free flow of all information and scientific studies on bird flu and ending the gag order on public health communications?**

As the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) monitors cattle and poultry, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) monitors milk, and CDC monitors human virus cases, **will your Administration commit to continuing cross-agency calls and collaboration on bird flu?**

The most effective way to cut through agency bureaucracy, which you claim to be in favor of, would be to increase agency communication with Congress, stakeholders, and the public.

Lastly, the National Milk Testing Strategy (NMTS) is important to facilitate comprehensive H5N1 surveillance of our milk supply and dairy herds. It provides a strategy to identify which States and herds within them are affected with the virus. The pasteurization process is 100 percent effective at eliminating the threat of bird flu in milk. 45 states are engaged in the NMTS.

**Will you commit to working with the remaining states critical to the NMTS to get them onboard and also to increasing surveillance within these states?**

We know you would not like to see another deadly pandemic unfold under your watch – thus, we await your swift action to completely lift the pause on external communications by public health agencies, commit to cross-agency collaboration on H5N1, and work to get every necessary state enrolled in the NMTS.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,



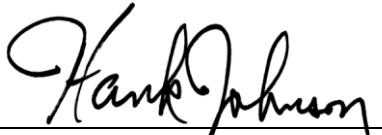
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Member of Congress



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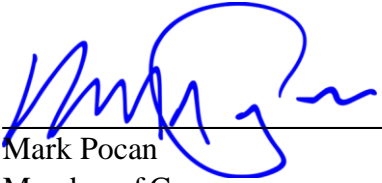
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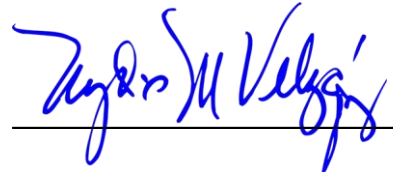
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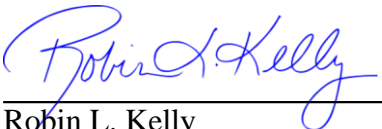
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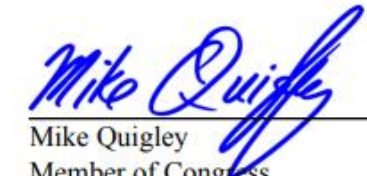
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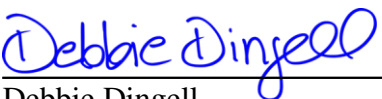
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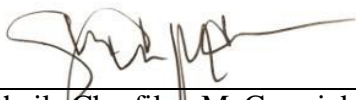
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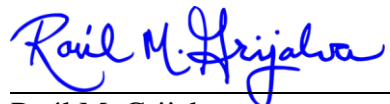
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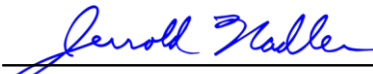
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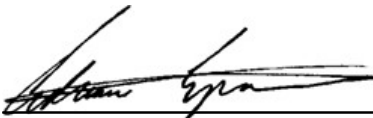
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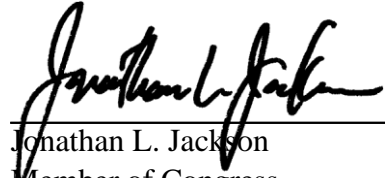
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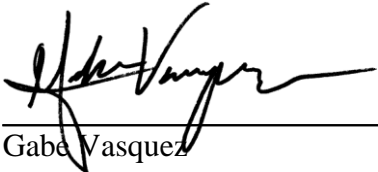
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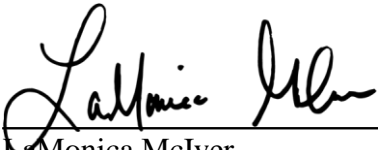
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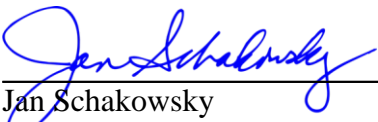
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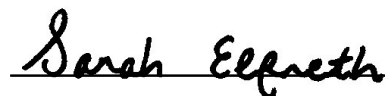
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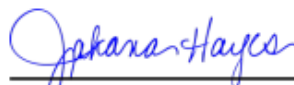
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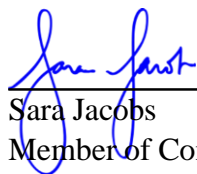
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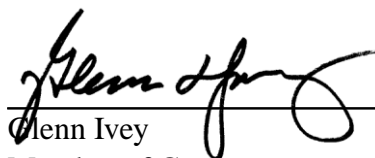
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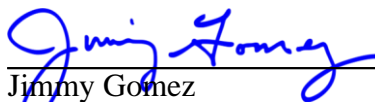
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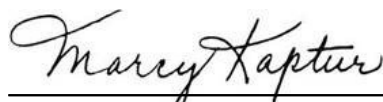
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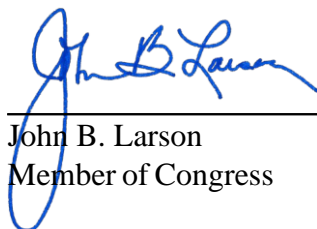
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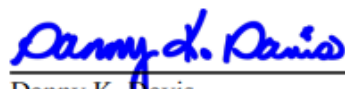
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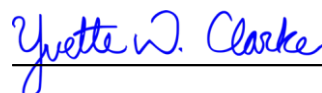
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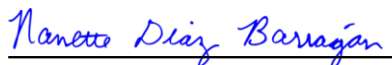
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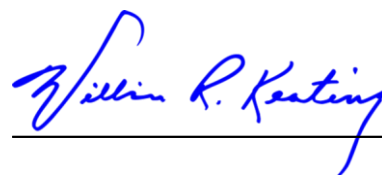
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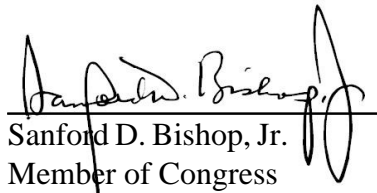
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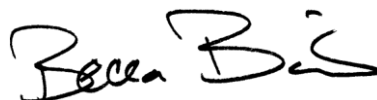
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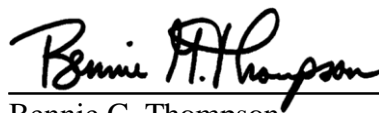
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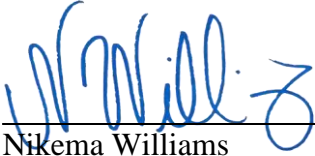


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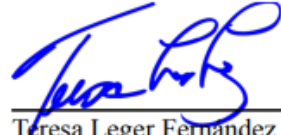


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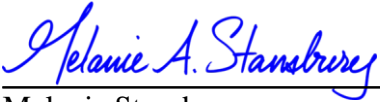




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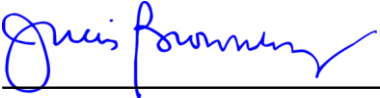
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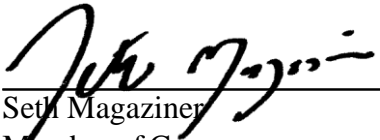
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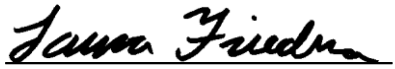
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CC:

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