

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2016

Chairman Tom Cole
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

Thank you for your leadership as the Appropriations Committee considers spending priorities for Fiscal Year 2017. We write today to ask for increased funding to address vector-borne diseases. As you are aware, these viruses are transmitted locally by *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes, both of which are located throughout the United States. While many symptoms of the viruses are mild, some such as Guillain-Barre syndrome and Microcephaly in the offspring of pregnant women are very serious.

With the emergence and spread of the Zika virus in the Western Hemisphere on the heels of West Nile, dengue, chikungunya, and other vector-borne diseases, we believe it is critical to build a sustainable nationwide capacity for the surveillance and control of mosquito vectors. With no vaccines or treatment for these diseases in sight, vector control is not only the first line of defense, it is really our only defense at this point.

In order to increase that defense, we ask for your support of the following appropriations requests:

\$100 million in aid to local government mosquito control programs

The Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health (MASH) Act (PL 108-175) was designed to support local government mosquito control activities during the first West Nile virus outbreak. This bill authorized federal funds for local governments to protect our communities from mosquitoes and other disease vectors. By the time the MASH Act was signed into law in 2003 the West Nile crisis had largely passed. Today we face another imminent outbreak of a disease, the Zika virus, for which mosquito control is currently the best short-term solution. Fortunately, Congress has the means readily at hand to help prevent or minimize the risk if it chooses to devote dollars to this urgent threat.

\$50 million for the Division of Vector-Borne Diseases (DVBD) at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

The DVBD is our nation's main means of detecting, controlling, and preventing bacteria, viruses, and pathogens transmitted by mosquitoes, ticks, and fleas. The CDC leverages their experts with state and local health officials to conduct field investigations and laboratory research. A key component of this program is their Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity grant

program which provides local health jurisdictions with personnel, equipment, and resources to detect and respond to mosquito transmitted diseases. While this program is highly effective, the fiscal year 2016 enacted funding level of \$26.8 million is woefully inadequate to combat a spread of Zika across the United States. We urge the committee to provide additional funding for this division to ensure that we have the capacity to fight the spread of Zika, Chikungunya, Dengue, and West Nile viruses.

\$27 million for new tools against vector borne viruses

Mosquito control tools available today are not ideal for responding to the challenges of *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*, the mosquitoes most likely to spread Zika, dengue, and related viruses. These mosquitoes are notoriously difficult to control, but recent advances in our understanding of mosquito biology have led to a wide range of emerging technologies that could be registered and in the market soon with our support. In 1996 Congress unanimously supported the Food Quality Protection Act, which, among other things, authorized the use of federal funds for pesticide public health data. \$27 million funded under this authority would help small pesticide producers register their products, ensuring that we have the best tools to control vector-borne diseases.

Sincerely,



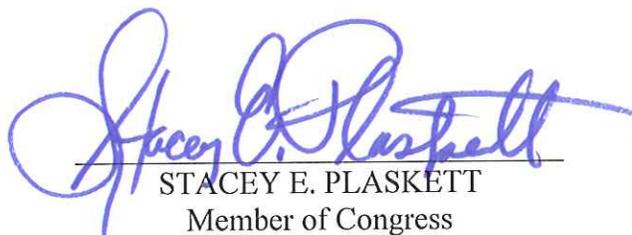
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Member of Congress



CURT CLAWSON
Member of Congress



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STACEY E. PLASKETT
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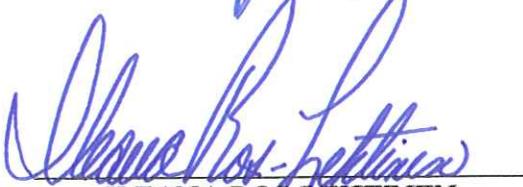
STEVE COHEN
Member of Congress



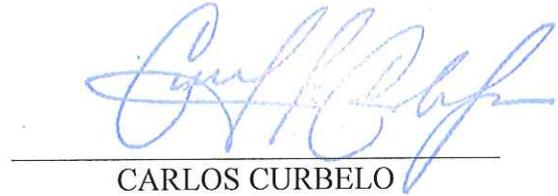
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