

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 11, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Rollins:

We write with great concern regarding the current outbreak of New World Screwworm (NWS) within the United States and the growing threat this pest poses to livestock producers, farm workers, companion animals, wildlife, and rural economies across the country. Since June 3, 2026, the United States Department of Agriculture has confirmed at least seven cases of New World Screwworm in Texas and New Mexico. Due to the scale of the animal health threat that New World Screwworm poses to the United States, we urge the USDA to take further immediate action to contain and respond to this emergency.

We are aware that the USDA has engaged in preliminary efforts to contain this outbreak, including enhanced surveillance, sterile fly releases, coordination with animal health officials in Texas and New Mexico, and the confirmation that the U.S. food supply remains safe. These actions are critical first steps, but the evolving situation demands additional actions to ensure that the United States is adequately responding to the significance of this threat.

To strengthen the federal response, we urge USDA to explore and utilize the following measures:

Expand Countermeasure Production

- Expand and accelerate the production of sterile flies, including surges in research investments to support innovation in NWS containment and eradication, similar to the New World Screwworm Grand Challenge Funding Opportunity.
- Coordinate and expedite approval with other federal agencies for technologies that prove to be safe and effective.
- Explore authorities under the Defense Production Act and, if feasible, use these authorities to expand production of veterinary countermeasures and sterile flies.

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- Identify partnership opportunities to contract with Biosafety Level 2 (BSL-2) laboratories to expand sterile fly production.

Improve Government Coordination and Outreach

- Incentivize reporting through the implementation of indemnification for livestock and poultry producers who report suspected cases of New World Screwworm, modeled after the indemnification program for milk losses from dairy cattle due to avian flu.
- Provide additional funding for education and outreach to livestock and poultry organizations and other impacted stakeholders at the local and state level, including outreach through trusted partners like Land-Grant Universities and the Cooperative Extension System.
- Activate all available accredited USDA veterinarians to increase surveillance of New World Screwworm and, in their role as mandated reporters of foreign animal pests and diseases, underscore the requirement to immediately report any suspected cases of NWS.
- Call an emergency meeting of USDA New World Screwworm leadership, border state commissioners of agriculture, and state veterinarians to coordinate on surveillance, deployment of staff for inspections, and USDA's capacity to deploy sterile flies in areas that could be impacted.
- Increase outreach and funding for all states that are viable habitats for a long-term infestation of New World Screwworm.

Increase USDA Capacity

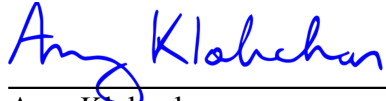
- Use direct hiring authorities to expand current Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service including Veterinary Services and Wildlife Services, Agricultural Research Service, and National Institute for Food and Agriculture staff.
- As a part of the USDA's broader reorganization, commit to not disrupting the New World Screwworm outbreak response through permanent relocation orders.

As the current outbreak of New World Screwworm continues to evolve, we will continue to work with the USDA to respond to this threat. While addressing this outbreak requires immediate and sustained attention, it is equally important that we do not lose sight of other animal pest and disease threats facing poultry and livestock producers across the country. We ask that the USDA continue to provide transparency on the ongoing outbreak and efforts related to the measures outlined above as they are taken, but no less than thirty days after receipt of this letter.

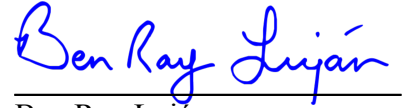
Sincerely,

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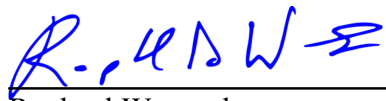
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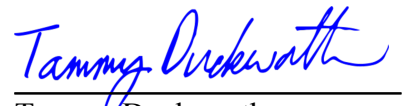
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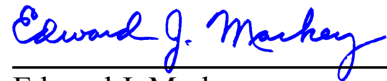
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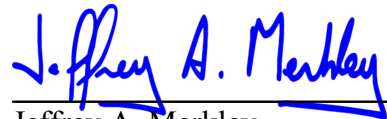
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