

June 29, 2020

Chairwoman Nita M. Lowey  
U.S. House of Representatives  
House Committee on Appropriations  
2365 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Kay Granger  
U.S. House of Representatives  
House Committee on Appropriations  
1026 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Richard Shelby  
U.S. Senate  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
304 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Vice Chairman Patrick Leahy  
U.S. Senate  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
437 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

The undersigned groups urge you to ensure adequate funding for Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Agriculture Quarantine Inspection (AQI) at U.S. international ports of entry. The global COVID-19 pandemic threatens to disrupt agriculture inspections, which are critical to preventing the introduction of plant and animal pests and diseases that could devastate American agriculture.

The \$1 trillion U.S. agriculture sector is a crucial component of the American economy. CBP agriculture inspectors perform critically important agricultural inspections every day at the nation's ports of entry to prevent the entry of foreign plant and animal pests and diseases. Foreign pests and diseases, such as African swine fever, which has killed more than one out of every four pigs globally, would have a devastating effect on American agriculture if they reached our shores.

Agriculture inspection of international passengers and cargo is carried out by CBP's Agriculture Specialists, Technicians and Canine Teams. These CBP personnel are ordinarily funded by AQI user fees, collected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and transferred to CBP to cover salaries and expenses of the inspectors. The global COVID-19 pandemic has caused a precipitous downturn in international travel and lowered cargo imports. International air travel alone has fallen by nearly 98%. Maritime shipping is down nationally by double-digit percentages year-on-year, with drops in volume varying from seaport to seaport. And virtually all seaport passenger travel has halted, with the 2020 tourism season virtually eliminated.

This unprecedented decline has resulted in such dramatically reduced AQI user fee collections that even the APHIS' user fee reserve fund will be depleted by the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2020. With user fee collections not expected to rebound for the foreseeable future, the shortfall in funding for AQI at the ports of entry through the end FY 2021 is estimated to be \$630 million.

We urge Congress to ensure that the essential work of CBP agriculture inspectors continues uninterrupted throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We depend on AQI to ensure that America's agriculture sector remains safe from foreign animal and plant pests and diseases. It is inconceivable that Congress would risk widespread damage to U.S. agriculture and the overall economy by not funding these inspections.

Respectfully submitted,

Agricultural and Food Transporters Conference  
Agri-Mark Dairy Cooperative  
Alabama Cattlemen's Association  
Alabama Nursery and Landscape Association  
American Association of Avian Pathologists  
American Association of Bovine Practitioners  
American Association of Port Authorities  
American Association of Swine Veterinarians  
American Dairy Coalition  
American Dairy Goat Association  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Feed Industry Association  
American Honey Producers Association  
American Horse Council  
American Peanut Council  
American Seed Trade Association  
American Sheep Industry Association  
American Veterinary Medical Association  
AmericanHort  
Animal Health Institute  
Arizona Cattle Growers' Association  
Arkansas Cattlemen's Association  
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies  
Association of Veterinary Biologics Companies  
Border Trade Alliance  
California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association  
California Cattlemen's Association  
California Pork Producers Association  
Colorado Cattlemen's Association  
Colorado Livestock Association  
Colorado Pork Producers Council  
Corn Refiners Association  
Dairy Producers of New Mexico  
Dairy Producers of Utah  
Exotic Wildlife Association  
Farm Credit Council  
Florida Cattlemen's Association

Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association  
Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association  
Fresh Produce Association of the Americas  
Georgia Cattlemen's Association  
Georgia Pork Producers Association  
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council  
Hawaii Pork Producers  
Idaho Cattle Association  
Illinois Beef Association  
Illinois Green Industry Association  
Illinois Pork Producers Association  
Indiana Beef Cattle Association  
Indiana Pork Producers Association  
Iowa Cattlemen's Association  
Iowa Institute for Cooperatives  
Iowa Nursery & Landscape Association  
Iowa Pork Producers Association  
Kansas Livestock Association  
Kansas Pork Association  
Kentucky Cattlemen's Association  
Kentucky Pork Producers Association  
Livestock Marketing Association  
Louisiana Cattlemen's Association  
Louisiana Nursery and Landscape Association  
Maritime Exchange for the Delaware River and Bay  
Maryland Cattlemen's Association  
Maryland Nursery, Landscape and Greenhouse Association  
Michigan Agri-Business  
Michigan Cattlemen's Association  
Michigan Nursery & Landscape Association  
Michigan Pork Producers Association  
Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association  
Minnesota Pork Producers Association  
Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association  
Mississippi Pork Producers Association  
Missouri Cattlemen's Association  
Missouri Green Industry Alliance  
Missouri Pork Association  
Montana Pork Producers Council  
Montana Stockgrowers Association  
National Animal Interest Alliance  
National Association of Federal Veterinarians  
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
National Chicken Council

National Christmas Tree Association  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association of America  
National Grain and Feed Association  
National Milk Producers Federation  
National Oilseed Processors Association  
National Onion Association  
National Pork Producers Council  
National Sorghum Producers  
National Treasury Employees Union  
National Turkey Federation  
Nebraska Cattlemen  
Nebraska Pork Producers Association, Inc.  
Nevada Cattlemen's Association  
New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association  
New Mexico Farm & Livestock Bureau  
New York Pork Producers Co-op  
North American Deer Farmers Association  
North American Elk Breeders Association  
North American Meat Institute  
North American Renderers Association  
North Carolina Cattlemen's Association  
North Carolina Pork Council  
North Dakota Pork Council  
North Dakota Stockmen's Association  
Northeast Dairy Farmers Cooperatives  
Ohio Cattlemen's Association  
Ohio Nursery & Landscape Association  
Ohio Pork Council  
Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association  
Oklahoma Pork Council  
Oregon Association of Nurseries  
Oregon Cattlemen's Association  
Oregon Dairy Farmers Association  
Oregon Pork Producers  
Oregon Women for Agriculture  
Pet Food Institute  
Plant California Alliance  
Pork Producers of Pennsylvania  
Produce Marketing Association  
Professional Dairy Managers of Pennsylvania  
Rural & Agriculture Council of America  
Society of American Florists  
South Dakota Association of Cooperatives  
South Dakota Cattlemen's Association  
South Dakota Pork Producers Council

Tennessee Cattlemen's Association  
Tennessee Pork Producers Association  
Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association  
Texas Cattle Feeders Association  
Texas Citrus Mutual  
Texas International Produce Association  
Texas Pork Producers Association  
U.S. Dry Bean Council  
United Egg Producers  
United Fresh Produce Association  
United States Animal Health Association  
United States Cattlemen's Association  
Upstate Niagara Cooperative, Inc.  
US Rice Producers Association  
USA Rice Federation  
Utah Cattlemen's Association  
Utah Pork Producers  
Virginia Cattlemen's Association  
Virginia Pork Council, Inc.  
Washington Cattle Feeders Association  
Washington State Cattlemen's Association  
Washington State Dairy Federation  
Washington State Potato Commission  
West Virginia Cattlemen's Association  
Western Growers Association  
Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association  
Wisconsin Pork Association  
Wyoming Stock Growers Association

cc:

Chair and Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
Chair and Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

Chair and Ranking Member, House Agriculture Committee  
Chair and Ranking Member, House Committee on Homeland Security  
Chair and Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry  
Chair and Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs