

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 5, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
SD128  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski  
Vice Chairwoman  
Committee on Appropriations  
SD128  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Chairman  
Agriculture Subcommittee  
Committee on Appropriations  
SD129  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
Ranking Member  
Agriculture Subcommittee  
Committee on Appropriations  
SD190  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairwoman Mikulski, Senator Moran and Senator Merkley:

Since January 2015, H5 viruses have affected backyard and commercial poultry production in 13 states and resulted in the loss of over 21 million birds nationwide. As you consider Fiscal Year 2016 appropriations, please ensure that the National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN), which performs the testing required to limit the spread of the ongoing highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) outbreak, is a funding priority.

The outbreak and spread of HPAI are having severe economic consequences throughout the industry. Across the U.S., an estimated 52,000 family farms that raise poultry are at risk. NAHLN laboratories have been operating at capacity, performing hundreds of tests daily, seven days a week, in order to quickly identify affected farms and enable animal health officials to contain the virus. The Agricultural Act of 2014 authorized \$15 million for the NAHLN to ensure the continuity of diagnostic laboratory operations during an animal disease outbreak – like HPAI – and help prevent farmers from losing their livelihood. We respectfully request that full funding for the NAHLN be provided so that timely avian influenza testing is maintained.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Al Franken  
United States Senator



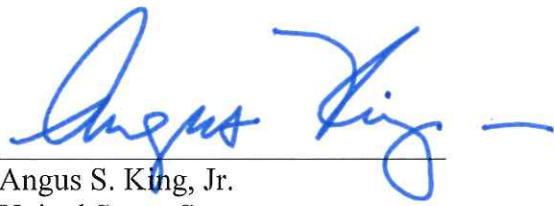
Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator