

August 4, 2021

The Honorable Tina Smith
720 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Smith and Grassley

We, the undersigned groups, write today to thank you for your leadership in protecting animal and human health by strengthening the federal oversight of imported canines. At the request of Congress, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 2019 issued a study that determined over one million dogs are imported into the U.S. annually, but less than one percent of those animals undergo an adequate health screening to ensure they are healthy enough to travel and free of disease and parasites before entering the country.

In the absence of proper health requirements, imported dogs have been responsible for the introduction and transmission of diseases and pests into the U.S., including rabies, canine influenza, leptospirosis, melioidosis, onchocerosis and screwworm. There is also a growing concern amongst the producer groups that imported dogs and even their crates and bedding could transfer a foreign animal disease that will devastate the U.S. livestock industry.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 6 out of every 10 known human infectious diseases, including 75 percent of new diseases discovered in the last decade, are zoonotic in origin. Despite this, the U.S. lacks even the most basic health requirements such as proper veterinary care prior to transporting a canine, appropriate identification and vaccination of dogs before arrival in the U.S., and strong coordination between the federal agencies that oversee animal and public health. Our system falls far short of those of other developed countries, who have stringent requirements for the movement of and importation of all animals.

We applaud you for introducing the Healthy Dog Importation Act, which addresses the current gaps in oversight and prioritizes the prevention of disease introduction from imported dogs that threatens both animal and public health.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Veterinary Acupuncture

American Association of Bovine Practitioners

American Association of Food Safety & Public Health Veterinarians

American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners

American Association of Swine Veterinarians

American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges

American Kennel Club

American Pet Products Association

American Sheep Industry Association

American Veterinary Medical Association
Animal Health Institute
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Iowa Veterinary Medical Association
International Pet and Animal Transportation Association
Master of Foxhounds Association of America
Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association
National Animal Interest Alliance
National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Pork Producers Council
Pet Food Institute
Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council
Protect the Harvest
World Pet Association