

May 6, 2022

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Chairwoman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
129 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
125 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Baldwin and Ranking Member Hoeven:

As you prepare the Fiscal Year 2023 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we request robust funding to address the ongoing highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) outbreak.

Since it was first confirmed in February 2022 in a commercial turkey flock in Indiana, HPAI has been detected in 32 states across the country and has killed over 36 million birds. Although the virus poses minimal risk to human health, it has serious implications for U.S. poultry producers, rural communities, and our agricultural economy.

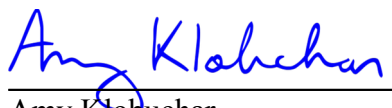
These are the first positive HPAI cases since the 2015 outbreak that killed more than 50 million birds, accounting for 12 percent of the egg laying hen population and 8 percent of the turkey inventory. The Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), in partnership with state and local agencies, has responded quickly and applied the experience gained from the 2015 outbreak to better inform on-the-ground, rapid response efforts.

The APHIS avian health program is responsible for avian influenza surveillance, reporting, and control efforts, as well as distributing indemnity payments to affected poultry producers. As the number of confirmed HPAI cases has increased, APHIS has ramped up its action in response, using significant resources to do so.

The President's budget request for the APHIS avian health program was \$65 million for FY 2023, which reflects a small increase from the enacted level of \$63 million in FY2021 and 2022. Given the recent outbreak, the ongoing increase in confirmed HPAI cases, and the likelihood of further spread, we urge the Subcommittee to make funding for the APHIS avian health program a high priority. These funds are critical to continue HPAI response measures.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Charles E. Grassley
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Thomas Tillis
United States Senator



Raphael G. Warnock
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator