

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

May 1, 2024

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

As you are aware, every state in the nation has been hit with a recent outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) due to its spread from migratory waterfowl to domestic bird populations and commercial poultry. The spread of the strain to livestock, including goats and cattle, and a farmworker in Texas, underscores the urgency required to confront this outbreak through a collaborative federal response, heightened surveillance, and additional resources to support vaccine research.

The evolving risk this outbreak poses demands a broad, coordinated approach from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration, state and local partners, and researchers. Previous outbreaks have benefited from a consortium strategy wherein the USDA brought together the brightest minds in epidemiology and animal health research to lessen the potential economic and societal cost of the spread. We ask that the USDA take a similar approach — including additional research on wild bird deterrents, vaccines, and advanced biosecurity practices — when combating the current outbreak. A successful response to this outbreak demands a commitment to keeping farmers, ranchers, and veterinarians informed of the latest developments while efficiently coordinating mitigation efforts. This includes increasing genomic pathogen surveillance and rapid dissemination of genomic sequence data.

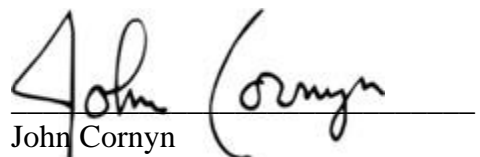
It is critical that the USDA, FDA, CDC, and other agencies as necessary continue to provide the public with coordinated, up-to-date, and accurate information on the spread of HPAI, particularly around the safety of the U.S. commercial milk or meat supply and the risk to human health. As the wild bird migration continues this spring, we stand ready to work with you and department staff to contain and stop this outbreak and minimize harm to rural America.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



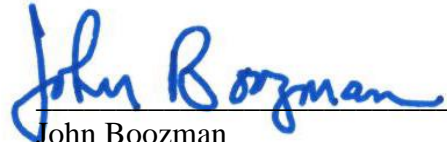
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



John Boozman
United States Senator



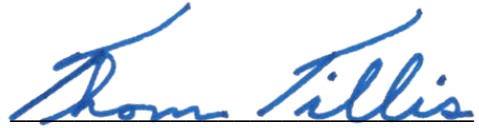
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



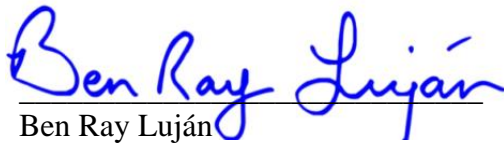
John Thune
United States Senator



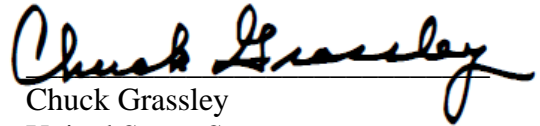
John Fetterman
United States Senator



Thom Tillis
United States Senator



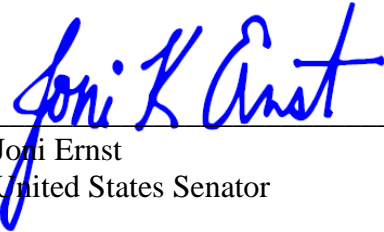
Ben Ray Luján
United States Senator



Chuck Grassley
United States Senator



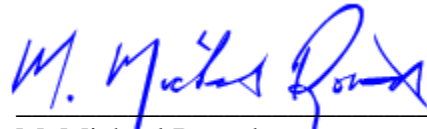
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Joni Ernst
United States Senator



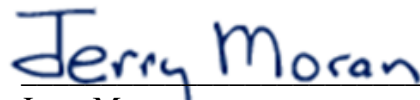
Tina Smith
United States Senator



M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Jerry Moran
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator