

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member – House Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,

 Education and Related Agencies

Washington, DC 20510

**RE: *Stimulus Funding Request - Resources Needed to Safeguard Public Health from Mosquito and Vector-Borne Disease Threats***

Dear Representative Roybal-Allard:

Given the rising challenges to public health, critical investments must be made to strengthen our nation’s public health infrastructure and safeguard our country from serious diseases, including vector-borne threats. We have witnessed how a lack of preparedness for Coronavirus has affected us, and we are now heading into mosquito and tick season. To address multiple challenges, public health and vector control professionals must be equipped with the resources and capacity necessary for the prevention, treatment, and control of vector-borne diseases.

*“Our country currently has limited capacity to properly control mosquitoes, ticks and other sources of vector-borne disease that are causing more and more people to become ill,*” the American Medical Association (AMA) recently noted. AMA concluded “*In order to protect our citizens from illness, we must ensure that health departments and other vector control organizations are equipped with funding and resources necessary to prevent and control vector-borne diseases*.” \*

**Given the rising threat from mosquito-borne and other vector-borne diseases, and our nation’s limited existing capacity to respond to such threats, we urge action by Congress to fund and support the implementation of the SMASH and TICK Acts, recent public health preparedness measures enacted by Congress.**

**REQUEST:** ***CDC’s Division of Vector-Borne Diseases funding of $100 million is requested as designated under the Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health (SMASH) Act in support of programs for mosquito-borne and other vector-borne diseases’ surveillance and control.***

**REQUEST: *TICK Act funding is requested to carry out the authorized national strategy for vector-borne diseases, including mosquito-borne illness, through expanded support of Regional Centers of Excellence in Tick and Vector-Borne Diseases ($10 million annually), as well as resources to increase capacity to identify, report, prevent, and respond to such diseases ($20 million annually).***

West Nile virus, Eastern Equine Encephalitis, Lyme disease, and other vector-transmitted diseases are already present in the United States. Capacity needs to be expanded so vector control professionals can protect our citizens from these debilitating diseases. Thank you for your ongoing attention to critical issues facing our nation’s public health and welfare.

**Sincerely,**

 **Ary Faraji, PhD**

**President**

**American Mosquito Control Association (AMCA)**

**BACKGROUND**

***We urge Congress to fund and support the implementation of the SMASH and TICK Acts, recent public health preparedness measures enacted by Congress***

**SMASH Act**

The provisions of the *Strengthening Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health* “SMASH” Act, (Public Law No: 116-22) enacted into law in June 2019, are long overdue and, if appropriately funded, will substantially further our nation’s core values of protecting public health far into the future. Public health agencies, and state and local mosquito control districts, must be prepared to meet the challenges of mosquito-borne illness. The measure provides a critical framework to confront this public health threat.

The SMASH Act reauthorized Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) resources to be used to address emerging infectious mosquito-borne diseases and improve existing control programs for the protection of public health in our nation. Specifically, the measure expands and extends authorization for $100 million in annual grants for mosquito prevention, control, and response programs.

**TICK Act**

The *Kay Hagen Ticks: Identify, Control, and Knockout* or “TICK” Act, (Public Law No: 116-94) enacted into law in December 2019 within the *Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation*“PAHPAI” Act, provides for the following measures to strengthen public health preparedness:

* National strategy to address vector-borne disease, including mosquito-borne illness, to identify and assesses gaps in federally funded programs, as well as the development of strategic goals to counteract such public health threats and set appropriate benchmarks to assess progress.
* Regional Centers of Excellence, authorizing $10 million annually to programs charged with:
* Facilitating collaboration in public health surveillance, prevention, and response activities related to vector-borne diseases;
* Training for public health entomologists and other health care professionals to address vector-borne diseases;
* Developing innovative methods to anticipate and respond to disease outbreaks, or preparing for and responding to outbreaks of vector-borne diseases.
* Enhanced capacity to address vector-borne disease, through authorization of $20 million annually, in areas at high risk of vector-borne diseases to increase local capacity to identify, report, prevent, and respond to such disease threats.

\* The American Medical Association House of Delegates amended its policy aimed at protecting public health by advocating for adequate resources and funding to improve the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of vector-borne diseases in June 2019. <https://www.ama-assn.org/press-center/press-releases/ama-adopts-policy-prevent-further-spread-vector-borne-diseases>