

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 11, 2016

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We are writing to express our concerns on behalf of the millions of Americans, especially women of child-bearing age, regarding the severe, growing threat posed by the Zika virus and to urge your support for the Conference Report for H.R. 2577, which includes the Zika Response and Preparedness Act.

As you know, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Dr. Tom Frieden and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Gina McCarthy recently emphasized the importance of aerial spraying for mosquitos to combat the Zika virus in Puerto Rico. With growing number of reports of pregnant women contracting Zika and concerns about the island's mosquito abatement programs, both Administration officials encouraged aerial spraying, with Administrator McCarthy emphasizing that spraying was the "most important tool" at our disposal.

Members of the House and Senate have worked together with your Administration in a thoughtful but expedient manner to create a bicameral compromise agreement to address the spread of the Zika virus. The House-passed Conference Report for H.R. 2577, the Fiscal Year 2017 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act and Zika Response and Preparedness Act included \$1.1 billion in funding to combat the Zika virus and flexibility for mosquito control applicators to allow mosquito-specific pesticide spraying. These measures will help combat the spread of Zika, protect women's health, and save lives.

Eliminating the duplicative EPA permitting requirement for spraying pesticides by enacting bipartisan legislation such as H.R. 897, the Zika Vector Control Act and S. 1500, the Sensible Environmental Protection Act, will significantly improve our nation's ability to combat public health threats such as Zika.

The requirement to obtain a Clean Water Act National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) pesticide general permit (PGP) was caused by a 2009 Federal Court decision and adds time-consuming, costly red-tape that discourages regular aerial spraying for mosquitos. Pesticides used to kill mosquitos are already approved and regulated by the EPA under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA.) Eliminating this unnecessary, duplicative permit requirement will encourage communities to spray for mosquitos on a regular basis and help alleviate the burdens on our public health system by preventing the spread of Zika today, rather than reacting to it tomorrow.

If the Administration does not work with Congress to address this potentially life-threatening issue, the Zika crisis in Puerto Rico will certainly spread to the continental United States, threatening the

health and safety of all Americans, especially women of childbearing age and millions of unborn children. As Director Frieden said, the continental U.S. would have sprayed months ago if we had the alarming wide-spread Zika epidemic Puerto Rico is experiencing today.

We urge you to consider Administrator McCarthy's comments that spraying can be accomplished "safety and effectively" and seriously consider these warnings from your directors at the CDC and the EPA. We must take action this week to quickly and appropriately commence a thorough mosquito abatement program, as included in the Zika conference package, immediately before the virus spreads further.

Sincerely,



Bob Gibbs  
Member of Congress



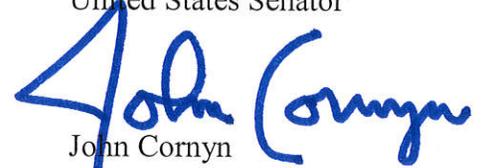
Steve Scalise  
Member of Congress



John Thune  
United States Senator



Mike Crapo  
United States Senator



John Cornyn  
United States Senator



Deb Fischer  
United States Senator