

September 3, 2009

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd
Chairman
United States Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
Senate Hart Office Building, Room 135
Washington, D.C. 20510

Sent Via Facsimile: 202-224-2100; 202-228-0002

Re: Request to Homeland Security Appropriations Conferees to Deny Funding for NBAF on U.S. Mainland

Dear Chairman Byrd:

The undersigned organizations strongly oppose the proposal by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to transfer disease research programs currently conducted at the Plum Island, N.Y., research facility to the U.S. mainland. Specifically, the DHS has proposed to establish a National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) in Manhattan, Kan., where research would be conducted on such highly contagious livestock diseases as foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) and contagious bovine pleuropneumonia. As you begin to conference the FY 2010 Homeland Security Appropriations Act, we urge you to deny funding for the NBAF project.

The highly contagious nature of FMD and other diseases proposed to be domiciled in the NBAF dictate that only a site far removed from significant livestock and meat production, and one protected by natural barriers, should be considered by the DHS. Only the Plum Island, N.Y., site meets these crucial criteria.

The consequence of an inadvertent disease outbreak from the proposed NBAF, which would be located in a region heavily populated by livestock, would likely be severe harm to the very sectors of the U.S. economy and U.S. population that the NBAF is supposed to protect – the U.S. livestock herd, U.S. cattle producers, and U.S. consumers.

The House-passed version of this legislation contains no funding for the construction of the NBAF. We support the House version, and we respectfully request that Congress adopt the House position by denying any appropriations to DHS for the purpose of transferring the disease research programs at Plum Island, N.Y., to the U.S. mainland.

Sincerely,

**Cattle Producers of Washington
Center for Rural Affairs
Colorado Independent CattleGrowers' Association
Dakota Resource Council
Dakota Rural Action**

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September 3, 2009

Page 2

Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance
Food & Water Watch
Independent Beef Association of North Dakota
Independent Cattlemen of Nebraska
Independent Cattlemen of Wyoming
Kansas Cattlemen's Association
Kansas Farmers Union
Mississippi Livestock Markets Association
Missouri's Best Beef, Inc.
National Farmers Union
Nebraska Farmers Union
New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association
New Mexico Federal Lands Council
Oregon Livestock Producers Association
Ozarks Property Rights Congress, MO
R-CALF USA
South Dakota Stockgrowers Association
The CJD Foundation
Western Organization of Resource Councils
Wyoming Stock Growers Association