



Healthy Dog Importation Act of 2023 Update June 2023

NAIA's lobbyists in Washington, DC have identified the upcoming Farm Bill as the ideal legislative vehicle to carry the Healthy Dog Importation Act.

What is the Farm Bill?

The Farm Bill is an omnibus, multiyear law that is up for reauthorization every five years covering an array of agricultural and food programs through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Farm Bill provides nutrition assistance, farm commodity revenue supports, crop insurance, conservation, trade and foreign food assistance, among other things.

Expected Process and Timing

The current Farm Bill (2018 Farm Bill) expires September 30, 2023, and the reauthorization process is ongoing in both the House and Senate. However, if the current bill expires without a replacement or extension in place, many of its programs will not halt on October 1st. For example, the SNAP Program is permanently authorized and would continue to pay out benefits in perpetuity. Commodity programs generally run on crop year; thus, USDA will continue to pay until the next crop year begins, the first of which is in January 2024. This means that if Congress is not able to pass a new Farm Bill by the end of the year, they must at least pass an extension of the 2018 Farm Bill to avoid impacts to key programs.

The stakeholder input process is well underway. The House and Senate Agriculture Committees have held hearings across the country and in DC to consider feedback on existing programs and gather input on new initiatives. Senators were required to submit their policy priorities to the Senate Ag Committee back in March; the House portal is currently open through June 9th.

The House and Senate have indicated they will begin considering their bills in Committee beginning in September. Our goal is to get the Healthy Dog Importation Act included in the base text of the House and Senate bills that will get marked up during the Committee process. If they are not included in the base text, there will be an opportunity to introduce an amendment with our bill. Amendments receive their own vote, so Member education on the Healthy Dog Importation Act is very critical.

Call to Action for NAIA Members

Please reach out to your congressional representatives (both House and Senate) to encourage them to cosponsor the Healthy Dog Importation Act of 2023 (H.R. 1184/S. 502). Bipartisan bills with a long list of cosponsors typically have an easier time being incorporated into the Farm Bill base text.

The following talking points may be used in your outreach:

- Animal and public health risks associated with dogs carrying contagious diseases and arriving without health records or vaccinations compelled Congress to provide the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) with some oversight of dog imports in the 2008 Farm Bill.
- Unfortunately, fifteen years after Congress provided that authority, USDA data on dog importation shows that the Department oversees the health and welfare of less than two percent of the 1 million+ dogs imported into the U.S. annually.

- In the absence of responsible health oversight and screenings, imported dogs have brought in diseases such as canine influenza, brucellosis, leptospirosis and rabies into our communities, threatening both animal and public health. Livestock groups are also becoming increasingly concerned that unscreened dog imports can carry highly contagious pathogens like African Swine Fever on their fur and in their bedding.
- The increasing number of rabies instances led the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to temporarily ban dogs imported from over 100 countries. While we are encouraged by the CDC's attention to this serious matter, their authority is narrowly limited to rabies and does not cover the other diseases being introduced into the U.S.
- To address these risks, I urge you to cosponsor the bipartisan and bicameral Healthy Dog Importation Act, which was introduced earlier this year by Representatives Dusty Johnson (R-SD) and Ann Kuster (D-NH) and Senators Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Tina Smith (D-MN).
- The Healthy Dog Importation Act would:
 - Ensure that all dogs imported into the U.S. are accompanied by a certificate of veterinary inspection (CVI) issued by a licensed veterinarian accredited by a competent authority recognized by the Secretary of Agriculture as well as permanently identified. The CVI, or health certificate, must certify that the dog has received all required vaccinations and demonstrated negative test results. CVIs are already required for interstate travel.
 - Allow documentation to be submitted electronically prior to arrival. All submitted information and CVIs will be made available to the secretaries of Health and Human Services (CDC), Commerce, and Homeland Security (CBP) through a centralized database to promote interagency coordination and streamline paperwork verification.
 - Provide USDA resources through a certificate fee to fund these initiatives.

Background on Bills

House bill (H.R. 1184) and Senate bill S 502 reintroduced by Representatives Dusty Johnson (R-SD-At Large) and Ann Kuster (D-NH-2) and Senators Grassley (R-IA) and Tina Smith (D-MN). Cosponsors include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rep. Rick Crawford (R-AR-1) • Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA-8) • Rep. David Rouzer (R-NC-7) • Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-CA-19) • Rep. Robert Wittman (R-VA-1) • Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN-4) • Rep. Angie Craig (D-MN-2) • Rep. Dwight Evans (D-PA-3) • Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN-9) • Rep. Deborah Ross (D-NC-2) • Del. Jenniffer Gonzalez-Colon (R-PR-At Large) • Rep. Andy Harris (R-MD-1) • Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA-2) • Rep. Trent Kelly (R-MS-1) • Rep. Rick Crawford (R-AR-1) • Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA-8) • Rep. David Rouzer (R-NC-7) • Rep. Jimmy Panetta (D-CA-19) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rep. Robert Wittman (R-VA-1) • Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN-4) • Rep. Angie Craig (D-MN-2) • Rep. Dwight Evans (D-PA-3) • Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN-9) • Rep. Deborah Ross (D-NC-2) • Del. Jenniffer Gonzalez-Colon (R-PR-At Large) • Rep. Andy Harris (R-MD-1) • Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA-2) • Rep. Trent Kelly (R-MS-1) • Sen. James Risch (R-ID) • Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-GA) • Sen. Roger Marshall (R-KS) • Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) • Sen. Angus King (I-ME) • Sen. Mike Rouns (R-SD)
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