

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

October 3, 2019

The Honorable Collin C. Peterson  
Chairman  
House Agriculture Committee  
1301 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable K. Michael Conaway  
Ranking Member  
House Agriculture Committee  
1010 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Peterson and Ranking Member Conaway:

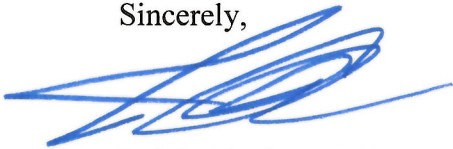
As veterinarians, animal and public health is a top priority for each of us. We strongly supported the bipartisan provision in the 2018 Farm Bill that required the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide the House and Senate Agriculture Committees with a report on the import of dogs into the U.S. We commend Secretary Perdue for issuing the report within the required time period.

As we have seen in recent years, diseases such as rabies, canine influenza, and leptospirosis can be introduced by imported dogs, risking the health of other animals and humans alike. Unfortunately, the recently released report from USDA reinforces concerns we raised in a letter sent to the House Agriculture Committee leadership on April 16, 2018 regarding the lack of authority over dog importation, the threats of diseases associated with imported animals, and the fractured oversight at the federal level.

According to USDA's report, 1.06 million live dogs are imported into the United States each year, but USDA ensures the health of virtually none of those animals. The report states, "no single Federal agency has the responsibility for regulating the import of dogs into the United States" and that fewer than 3,000 dogs arriving to this country fall under USDA's jurisdiction. Of the remaining 1.05 million dogs, the report explains that CDC exempts 75 percent of them from the single import requirement the agency imposes, a rabies vaccination certificate. This means that 788,000 dogs enter the country each year, with no USDA oversight, no CDC oversight, and no requirements for the animals' health or welfare.

We would not tolerate this lack of oversight for cattle, poultry, or swine arriving in the U.S., and we should not tolerate it for the animals who are our closest companions. We believe, given the results of USDA's study, that significant enforcement and recordkeeping authorities are needed to address risks associated with the importation of dogs, and we look forward to working in a bipartisan fashion with you and the Administration to enact these needed changes.

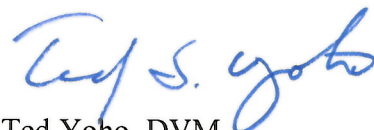
Sincerely,



Ralph Abraham, MD  
Member of Congress



Kurt Schrader, DVM  
Member of Congress



Ted Yoho, DVM  
Member of Congress