

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

March 13, 2020

The Honorable Sanford Bishop Jr.  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Agriculture, Rural Development,  
FDA, and Related Agencies  
235 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-6016

The Honorable Jeff Fortenberry  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Agriculture, Rural Development,  
FDA, and Related Agencies  
1514 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515-6016

Dear Chair and Ranking Member,

As you begin consideration of the FY2021 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations legislation, we ask that you ensure continued funding to research and combat the Spotted Lanternfly (SLF). As Members from areas affected by SLF or at risk of infestation from this invasive species, we see this as an urgent but modest investment in our region's economy and environment.

Spotted lanternflies are an invasive species of planthopper insect from southeast Asia, which were first found in Berks County, Pennsylvania in 2014. Since that initial discovery, they have spread throughout the state of Pennsylvania and are starting to spread into other states such as New York, Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, and Delaware. These invasive pests are threatening agricultural industries such as vineyards, apple orchards, and hardwoods.

In addition to Pennsylvania, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has identified New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia, and New York as states that could see adverse effects from SLF infestation. In Pennsylvania alone, SLF could cost \$324 million and over 2,800 jobs annually, according to a study conducted by Penn State for the PA Department of Agriculture. According to USDA's National Agricultural Statistic Service, in New York, over 33,000 and 50,000 acres of grapes and apples are respectively at risk from SLF. Virginia could see its almost 11,000 acres of apples and 5,000 acres of grapes in production devastated by this pest.

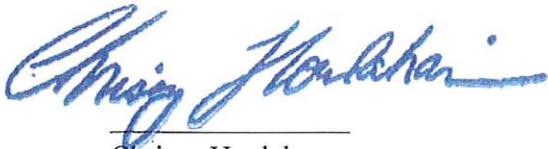
Besides the potential economic impact, SLF has proven to be a difficult pest to control, requiring unique control methods. Current procedures include traps, egg mass treatment, herbicide treatment of target hosts, and insecticide injection into target hosts. New research from Penn State and Cornell University is showing promising results using naturally occurring fungi. We

hope to see further USDA funding and support to state agencies to continue this research into control and eventual eradication.

In 2018, Secretary Sonny Perdue announced \$17.5 million in emergency funding to combat SLF. Last year, the USDA announced several further actions in their continued work against SLF. Nurseries and orchards became eligible for funding from the Tree Assistance Program (TAP) to replant or rehabilitate plants harmed by SLF. Additionally, \$10 million was proactively allocated by USDA to support comprehensive response efforts including mitigation, treatment evaluations, monitoring tools, impact assessments, biological control, and outreach in PA, MA, NJ, NY, VA, DE, and NC. Almost \$4 million was also designated for rapid response to several pest species, including SLF. At the end of 2019, USDA funded \$7.3 million for research and extension efforts on this pest, in a grant led by Penn State University with collaborators from USDA-ARS, USDA APHIS, University of Delaware, Cornell University, University of Rhode Island, Rutgers University, Temple University, and Virginia Tech. We strongly support these efforts.

Analysis by the USDA and State Departments of Agriculture – such as New York and Pennsylvania – have shown that further and decisive action must be taken in order to see continued success against SLF to help our communities. We ask for your committee’s continued support against this pest which has the potential to devastate the agricultural and tourism industries across our respective states. We request the Committee’s support for a total funding level of \$16 million this year – building from the historic appropriation of \$12 million in FY20 plus the set aside of \$4 million in the USDA’s FY21 budget request to Congress. We would also ask that, in the interest of fiscal responsibility, the committee evaluate other invasive species programs which have been successful to reallocate funds to offset this increase.

Thank you for your leadership and your consideration of our views. Our staff points of contact for this matter are Kurtis Miller ([Kurtis.Miller@mail.house.gov](mailto:Kurtis.Miller@mail.house.gov)) with Rep. Houlahan and John Busovsky ([John.Busovsky@mail.house.gov](mailto:John.Busovsky@mail.house.gov)) with Rep. Thompson.



Chrissy Houlahan  
Member of Congress

Sincerely,



Glenn 'GT' Thompson  
Member of Congress

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member of Congress