

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 8, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

Thank you for your support of American agriculture and recent visits to our home state of Pennsylvania. We hope you enjoyed the opportunity to engage with representatives of Pennsylvania's agricultural industry and discuss issues facing our farmers, ranchers, and growers. Specifically, this includes the importance of the 2018 Farm Bill, risk management tools, new export markets and workforce shortages.

We write today requesting your continued attention to another issue: the invasive and destructive spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*). As your Department prepares the Fiscal Year 2021 budget submission to Congress, we request that you consider increasing funding for grant programs that affected communities can use to address this insidious problem.

As you know, the spotted lanternfly is an invasive planthopper that originated in China and was first identified in the U.S. in Berks County in 2014. Our region has been hit hard by the pest, which continues to spread throughout the Commonwealth and is now being found in several adjoining states. According to Penn State University research, the spotted lanternfly is affecting vineyards, tree-fruit, hardwood, nursery and landscape industries. Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture analysis indicates the potential damage amounts to \$18 billion per year statewide, which does not include further costs on other affected states. For example, in 2017, Chester County alone had \$605,000 in Christmas trees and \$1,845,000 in fruits, tree nuts, and berries which could be at risk from spotted lanternflies. In addition to their economic impact on the agriculture and timber industries, we have heard strong concerns from many homeowners as this invasive insect can cover plants, cars, patios and outdoor items with a sticky, sugary substance that attracts other insects and promotes mold growth.

We appreciate the attention you and your team have already paid to this growing issue, including your decision last year to provide emergency funding to stop the lanternflies' spread. The Department's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is playing an important leading role in educating Americans about "hungry pests" and how to fight their spread. The Administration's FY2020 budget included a \$7 million increase to assist states with addressing the spotted lanternfly, and we support that request as the current appropriations process for the FY20 cycle progresses.

Sustained funding for this initiative will help our local communities plan their eradication efforts and leverage state and local funding sources, as well. We ask that in your FY2021 budget, you include robust funding for this effort, totaling no less than FY20 requested levels. We also ask that you ensure ample funding for any research into novel approaches to eradicate this pest completely, so that annual funding will not be required in the future.

We appreciate USDA's attention to this matter in past years and look forward to working with you to eradicate this pest from our farms and neighborhoods. Thank you for your consideration of our views.

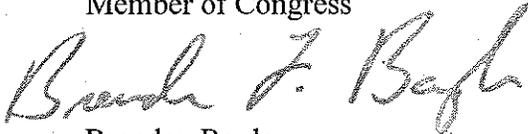
Sincerely,



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



Glenn 'GT' Thompson
Member of Congress



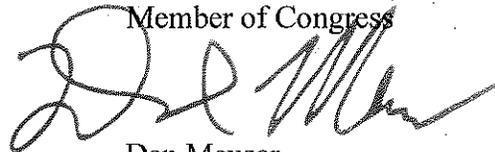
Brendan Boyle
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



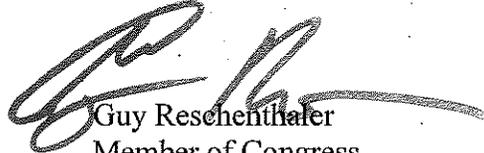
Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



Dan Meuser
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



Guy Reschenthaler
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Fred Keller
Member of Congress



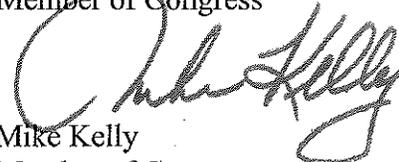
Conor Lamb
Member of Congress



Lloyd Smucker
Member of Congress



Susan Wild
Member of Congress



Mike Kelly
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Perry". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Scott Perry
Member of Congress