

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 1, 2015

The Honorable Shaun Donovan, Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Donovan:

It has come to our attention that the involvement of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in reviewing USDA's indemnification determinations under the Animal Health Protection Act may be impeding the expeditious release of funds desperately needed to fight the spread of the H5N2 strain of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). The purpose of this letter is to urge your office to support the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) efforts to quell the spread of H5N2 and to request information related to OMB's role in the process.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, over 16.1 million birds have already been depopulated or are pending depopulation as a result of the ongoing HPAI outbreak, and this number will have most likely risen by the time this letter is received. The severity of the current HPAI outbreak cannot be overstated. Each day, producers contact our offices expressing concern about the costs of depopulation, the uncertainties about how the infection is spreading, loss of export markets, and ultimately, the fact that there is no vaccine for this strain of avian influenza.

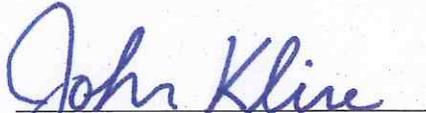
While we understand that it is OMB's responsibility to act in the most fiscally responsible manner, we urge you to recognize this outbreak as an instance of an extraordinary emergency in agriculture. To the extent OMB is involved in the internal deliberations, we request that OMB's involvement in no way impede the expeditious release of funds necessary to respond to this emergency.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working with the agency to promptly resolve this issue.

Sincerely,

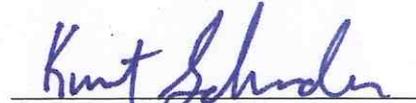


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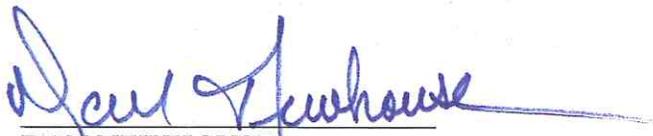

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