

necessary to effectively respond to current, emerging, and consistent homeland security threats.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support this bipartisan legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1494 the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) Homeland Security Partnerships Act. This legislation would require the Department of Homeland Security to develop a strategy to strengthen the partnerships between the Department and HBCU's. In turn, this would expose the talented students attending these institutions to more robust recruitment and hiring by the Department along with better cooperation by these institutions in DHS research and testing programs.

HBCU's and other Minority Serving Institutions have provided a quality education to millions of Americans seeking to gain knowledge and to better their career prospects. Many of the students who are attending these institutions come from diverse backgrounds and are the first in their families to pursue a postsecondary education. It is my strong belief that our federal workforce should be as diverse as possible so that the work our government does can impact all Americans. With the passage of this legislation today, the Department of Homeland Security will take a step towards a more diverse workforce. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. TORRES SMALL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1494, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROTECTING AMERICA'S FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ACT OF 2019

Ms. TORRES SMALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 2107) to increase the number of CBP Agriculture Specialists and support staff in the Office of Field Operations of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 2107

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Protecting America's Food and Agriculture Act of 2019".

SEC. 2. FINDING.

Congress finds that—

(1) it is in the national security interest of the United States to ensure that the Nation's food supply is sufficiently protected; and

(2) a vital part of such protection is the availability of adequate resources at the border to conduct inspections of incoming food and agricultural goods.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(A) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate;

(C) the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives; and

(D) the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives.

(2) CBP.—The term "CBP" means U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

SEC. 4. ADDITIONAL U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION PERSONNEL.

(a) CBP AGRICULTURE SPECIALISTS.—The Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection may hire, train, and assign 240 new CBP Agriculture Specialists above the current attrition level during every fiscal year until the total number of CBP Agriculture Specialists equals and sustains the requirements identified each year in the Agriculture Resource Allocation Model.

(b) MISSION AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT STAFF.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection may hire, train, and assign support staff to support CBP Agriculture Specialists.

(2) CBP AGRICULTURE TECHNICIANS.—The Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection may hire, train, and assign 200 new CBP Agriculture Technicians during each fiscal year until the total number of CBP Agriculture Technicians equals and sustains the requirements identified each year in the Mission and Operational Support Resource Allocation Model.

(c) CBP AGRICULTURE CANINE TEAMS.—The Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection may hire, train, and assign 20 new CBP agriculture canine teams during each of the first 3 fiscal years beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) TRAFFIC FORECASTS.—In calculating the number of CBP Agriculture Specialists needed at each port of entry through the Agriculture Resource Allocation Model, the Office of Field Operations shall—

(1) rely on data collected regarding the inspections and other activities conducted at each such port of entry; and

(2) consider volume from seasonal surges, other projected changes in commercial and passenger volumes, the most current commercial forecasts, and other relevant information.

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) CBP AGRICULTURE SPECIALISTS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out subsection (a)—

(A) \$29,900,000 for fiscal year 2020;

(B) \$36,100,000 for fiscal year 2021; and

(C) \$40,500,000 for fiscal year 2022.

(2) CBP AGRICULTURE TECHNICIANS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out subsection (b)—

(A) \$11,000,000 for fiscal year 2020;

(B) \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2021; and

(C) \$38,000,000 for fiscal year 2022.

(3) CBP AGRICULTURE CANINE TEAMS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out subsection (c)—

(A) \$3,500,000 for fiscal year 2020;

(B) \$7,400,000 for fiscal year 2021; and

(C) \$12,200,000 for fiscal year 2022.

(4) TRAINING.—There is authorized to be appropriated for training costs associated with the new CBP personnel and canine teams hired pursuant to subsections (a), (b), and (c) \$6,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2020, 2021, and 2022.

SEC. 5. GAO STUDY, BRIEFING, AND REPORT.

(a) STUDY.—The Comptroller General of the United States, after consultation with the appropriate congressional committees,

shall conduct a review of the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Agriculture, and other Federal agencies to address risks to the agricultural supply that analyzes—

(1) interagency coordination and the distribution of responsibilities among Federal agencies with respect to the inspection of agricultural commodities entering the United States;

(2) the effectiveness of such inspection responsibilities among Federal agencies; and

(3) the training provided to, and working conditions of, CBP Agriculture Specialists.

(b) BRIEFING.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall brief the appropriate congressional committees regarding the results of the study conducted pursuant to subsection (a).

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the briefing required under subsection (b), the Comptroller General shall complete the study required under subsection (a) and make the results of the study available to the public.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. TORRES SMALL) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CRENSHAW) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New Mexico.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. TORRES SMALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on this measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from New Mexico?

There was no objection.

Ms. TORRES SMALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of Senator PETERS' bill, the Protecting America's Food and Agriculture Act of 2019.

This bill comes at a time of crisis for America's agricultural industry. Threats from illnesses abroad endanger the domestic pork industry, while trade tensions have strained relationships with the international consumers our Nation's farmers supply.

The African swine flu, ASF, is a particular threat. A devastating illness that is still being studied, this flu has not made its way to the United States, and steps are being taken to ensure that it does not.

□ 1545

Agricultural inspectors within U.S. Customs and Border Protection are crucial in protecting our livestock and agricultural products from potential disease outbreaks. They are charged with scanning all incoming agricultural cargo and passengers to ensure that products are not coming into the United States that are diseased or contain pests.

S. 2107 provides for the hiring of additional inspectors to augment the workforce that is in place at our ports of entry. I commend Senator GARY PETERS for introducing this timely measure and also acknowledge my

House colleague, Representative FILEMON VELA, who introduced companion legislation.

The need for greater agricultural inspection resources at the border is critical. That is why stakeholders and leaders from across the Nation have spoken out in support of S. 2107. The message from over 150 organizations that either produce pork or are involved in the industry and the Governors from Utah, North Dakota, Ohio, Arkansas, Tennessee, Idaho, South Carolina, South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska, and Oklahoma is loud and clear: Get this bill to the President so it can be enacted into law.

This level of support demonstrates the vital need to pass this legislation with all possible haste. We must provide CBP with the resources needed to ensure a continued vitality of the American agricultural industry.

Today, we are protecting American pork. Tomorrow, it may be New Mexican chiles. That is why this is so important.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, February 3, 2020.

Hon. BENNIE THOMPSON,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: This letter confirms our mutual understanding regarding S. 2107, the "Protecting America's Food and Agriculture Act of 2019". Thank you for collaborating with the Committee on Agriculture on the matters within its jurisdiction.

The Committee on Agriculture will forego any further consideration of this bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor. However, by foregoing consideration at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation. We request that our committee be consulted and involved as this bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues in our jurisdiction. Our committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation and ask that you support any such request.

We would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to S. 2107, and request that a copy of our letters on this matter be published in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration.

Sincerely,

COLLIN C. PETERSON,
Chairman.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 3, 2020.

Hon. COLLIN PETERSON,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN PETERSON: Thank you for your letter regarding S. 2107, the "Protecting America's Food and Agriculture Act of 2019." I recognize that the Committee on Agriculture has a jurisdictional interest in S. 2107, and appreciate your effort to allow this bill to be considered on the House floor.

I concur with you that forgoing action on the bill does not in any way prejudice the

Committee on Agriculture with respect to its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future, and I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this legislation.

I will include our letters on S. 2107 in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of this bill. I look forward to working with you on this legislation and other matters of great importance to this nation.

Sincerely,

BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
Chairman.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of S. 2107, the Protecting America's Food and Agriculture Act of 2019.

As we know, much of the food and agricultural goods we consume come from all over the world, whether it be fruit, vegetables, herbs, or cut flowers.

As food and other agricultural goods arrive at our ports of entry, U.S. Customs and Border Protection agricultural specialists have a tremendous responsibility. They inspect those products to safeguard the U.S. food supply, the economy, and agriculture from potentially harmful or dangerous pests, pathogens, invasive plants, and agroterrorism.

CBP has advised Congress that there are hundreds of agriculture-related position vacancies at the agency on top of thousands of Border Patrol, customs officer, and other law enforcement vacancies. S. 2107 encourages CBP to hire, train, and assign agriculture specialists and associated support staff, technicians, and K-9 teams, and authorizes appropriations to do so.

The bill requires CBP to consider quantifiable inspection data, seasonal surge volumes, and projected changes in commercial forecasts at each port of entry when determining staffing needs.

The bill also directs the Comptroller General to conduct a review of Federal efforts to address risks to the agricultural supply that analyzes interagency coordination, effectiveness of inspections, and training and working conditions.

While I support this bill, I also encourage my colleagues to work across the aisle to provide CBP with the resources necessary to fill all of their sensitive position vacancies, including those at Border Patrol.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support S. 2107, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. TORRES SMALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON).

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

I rise in strong support of S. 2107, the Protecting America's Food and Agriculture Act of 2019.

Americans are blessed to live in a country where, in most communities, we can find healthy, fresh foods at our grocery stores. That does not just hap-

pen. Our Nation's food supply and agricultural industry make it happen.

As such, the agricultural industry is an indispensable sector of our national economy. Every year, millions and millions of pounds of fresh fruits, vegetables, cheeses, and meats enter the United States via commercial shipments from other countries.

While this flow of agricultural trade is fundamental to our economy and way of life, it does carry with it risk of importation diseases, pests, and compromised products.

To address this risk, agricultural inspectors in the U.S. Customs and Border Protection inspect incoming food and agricultural goods at our land, air, and sea ports.

Additionally, these inspectors interview passengers on incoming international flights to determine whether they are carrying prohibited agricultural items, because even an accidental transmission of a foreign pest or disease into our country could potentially devastate our agricultural system.

With African swine flu rampant in Asia, accounting for the deaths of millions of pigs as a result of disease, or to control this deadly disease, it is critical that the U.S. have adequate inspection resources in place.

S. 2107 would help ensure that we have agriculture inspectors in place to perform this critical mission.

I commend my counterpart in the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, Senator GARY PETERS, and my former committee colleague Representative FILEMON VELA for their leadership on this timely effort.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this measure and send this bill to the President's desk.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST).

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

I rise today in support of S. 2107, which will help ensure the safety and security of our agricultural imports.

The U.S. agriculture sector is a vitally important component of the American economy. In my district alone, agriculture is responsible for over 30,000 jobs and adds \$2 billion to the economy.

In China, African swine fever has killed more hogs than the entire U.S. herd combined. We must do everything we can to protect our domestic herds against the same fate.

In authorizing more CBP agriculture specialists and K-9 teams at our ports of entry, we can ensure the safety of our livestock while preserving billions of dollars in potential losses to American agriculture.

On behalf of thousands of livestock producers in my district, I urge my colleagues to support the passage of this bill.

Ms. TORRES SMALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VELA).

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

I rise in support of S. 2107, the Protecting America's Food and Agriculture Act of 2019. I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this crucial bill.

I introduced this important legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives with support from Members of both sides of the aisle. This bipartisan bill authorizes the hiring of additional agricultural specialists, agricultural technicians, and agricultural K-9 teams at our international ports of entry and has the support of nearly one dozen Governors and over 150 agriculture and trade stakeholders across this country.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD letters from Governors and industry groups addressing their support for this bill.

STATE OF UTAH,
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR,
Salt Lake City, UT, January 31, 2020.

Hon. BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. MIKE ROGERS,
Ranking Member, Committee on Homeland Security,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON AND RANKING MEMBER ROGERS: I appreciate your work leading the House Committee on Homeland Security. I write today in support of H.R. 4482, Protecting America's Food & Agriculture Act of 2019. The bill would authorize funding to hire additional Customs and Border Protection (CBP) personnel to help conduct Agriculture Quarantine Inspection services at the United States' ports of entry.

Utah has a robust agricultural sector, including a pork industry that is an important part of our state's economy. We are genuinely concerned about the potential impact of agricultural pests and diseases, including African Swine Fever. The Fever has not yet impacted the United States, but is wreaking havoc in other parts of the world and would pose a significant threat to the U.S. pork industry.

Through regional and national partnerships, we spend considerable effort as a state to detect and combat diseases and prevent outbreaks. However we need the federal government's support to prevent disease transmissions from foreign sources.

Thank you again for your work, and please let me know if can be helpful.

Sincerely,

GARY R. HERBERT,
Governor.

FEBRUARY 5, 2020.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
House of Representatives, House Committee on
Homeland Security, Washington, DC.

Ranking Member MIKE ROGERS,
House of Representatives, Committee on Homeland Security,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON AND RANKING MEMBER ROGERS: We the undersigned Governors request that the Committee on Homeland Security swiftly report out without amendment H.R. 4482, Protecting America's Food & Agriculture Act of 2019. This bill authorizes funding to hire additional Customs and Border Protection (CBP) personnel which are critically needed to conduct Agriculture Quarantine Inspection services at the United States' ports of entry. The Senate version of this bill, S. 2107, has been approved by the Senate by unanimous consent

and we are hopeful that it will be placed on the House suspension calendar.

The U.S. agriculture sector is vital to the American economy, generating over \$1 trillion in annual economic activity. Threats to the vitality of American agriculture present a danger to economic security at the local and state level across our nation. Indeed, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has calculated that foreign agricultural pests and diseases already cost the American economy tens of billions of dollars annually. We must vigilantly protect our borders against diseases such as African Swine Fever (ASF), which has killed more than one out of every four pigs on the planet and would have a devastating impact on U.S. livestock producers, their communities, and the economy if it were to reach the USA.

CBP employees perform critically important agricultural inspections every day at our nation's ports of entry. CBP Agricultural Specialists play a vital role in both trade and travel safety and preventing the introduction of harmful foreign animal diseases such as ASF and exotic plant pests into the U.S. CBP has been chronically understaffed at the ports of entry and currently reports a deficit of 721 Agriculture Specialists. Passage of the Protecting America's Food and Agriculture Act of 2019 will help close this gap by authorizing the hiring of 240 CBP Agriculture Specialists and 200 CBP Agriculture Technicians each year until the staffing shortage is closed.

The bill also authorizes the training and assignment each year of 20 new Agricultural Canine Teams, which are valuable assets in the detection of illicit fruits, vegetables and animal products that otherwise may be missed during inspections. These specially trained dogs have already demonstrated their ability to sniff out agricultural products that pose a danger. Finally, the bill authorizes supplemental appropriations each year to pay for the activities of the agriculture specialists, technicians and canine teams.

We ask that Congress authorize and fund the needed CBP Agriculture Specialists, Canine Teams and support staff to fully staff our international ports of entry. This investment will significantly enhance mitigation of national security threats, address public safety risks and grow the economy. We urge you to quickly discharge S. 2107/H.R. 4482 without amendments and advocate for its swift passage on the House suspension calendar.

Sincerely,

Hon. Doug Burgum, Governor of North Dakota;
Hon. Mike DeWine, Governor of Ohio;
Hon. Gary Herbert, Governor of Utah; Hon. Asa Hutchinson, Governor of Arkansas; Hon. Bill Lee, Governor of Tennessee; Hon. Brad Little, Governor of Idaho; Hon. Henry McMaster, Governor of South Carolina; Hon. Kristi Noem, Governor of South Dakota; Hon. Kim Reynolds, Governor of Iowa; Hon. Pete Ricketts, Governor of Nebraska; Hon. Kevin Stitt, Governor of Oklahoma.

JANUARY 22, 2020.

Chairman BENNIE G. THOMPSON,
House of Representatives, House Committee on
Homeland Security, Washington, DC.

Ranking Member MIKE ROGERS,
House of Representatives, Committee on Homeland Security,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON AND RANKING MEMBER ROGERS: The undersigned groups request that the Committee on Homeland Security expeditiously report out, without amendment, H.R. 4482, Protecting America's Food & Agriculture Act of 2019, a bill authorizing funding to hire additional Customs and Border Protection (CBP) personnel needed to conduct Agriculture Quarantine Inspection

at the international ports of entry. The Senate version of this bill, S. 2107, was recently approved by the Senate by unanimous consent.

The U.S. agriculture sector is a crucial component of the American economy, generating over \$1 trillion in annual economic activity. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, foreign pests and diseases cost the American economy tens of billions of dollars annually. CBP employees perform critically important agricultural inspections every day at the nation's ports of entry. CBP Agricultural Specialists play a vital role in both trade and travel safety and prevent the introduction of harmful foreign animal diseases and exotic plant pests into the U.S. Diseases such as African Swine Fever, which has killed more than one out of every four pigs on the planet, would have a devastating impact on U.S. livestock producers, their communities, and the economy if introduced into the U.S.

For years, CBP has been chronically understaffed at U.S. ports of entry. The most recent results of CBP's Agriculture Specialist Resource Allocation Model (AgRAM) shows a need for an additional 721 Agriculture Specialists. Passage of the Protecting America's Food and Agriculture Act of 2019 would authorize CBP to hire 240 Agriculture Specialists and 200 Agriculture Technicians each year until the staffing shortage determined by AgRAM is remedied. The bill also authorizes the training and assignment each year of 20 new Agricultural Canine Teams, which have proven valuable in detecting illicit fruits, vegetables, and animal products that may have otherwise been missed in initial inspections. These specially trained dogs are already being utilized by CBP to sniff out potentially contaminated products. Finally, the bill authorizes supplemental appropriations each year to pay for the activities of agriculture specialists, technicians, and canine teams.

We ask Congress to authorize and fund the needed CBP Agriculture Specialists, Canine Teams, and support staff at the international ports of entry to guard against national security threats, address public safety risks, and grow the economy. To achieve this goal, we urge you to quickly discharge S. 2107/H.R. 4482 without amendment and push for its swift passage in the House.

Respectfully submitted,

Agri-Mark Dairy Cooperative, Airports Council International-North America, Alabama Pork Producers, American Dairy Coalition, American Farm Bureau Federation, American Feed Industry Association, American Kennel Club, American Sheep Industry Association, American Veterinary Medical Association, AmericanHort, Border Trade Alliance, California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association, California Citrus Mutual, California Farm Bureau Federation, California Pork Producers Association, California Poultry Federation, Colorado Pork Producers Council, Dairy Producers of New Mexico, Dairy Producers of Utah, Fresh Produce Association of the Americas, Hawaii Pork Producers, Idaho Pork Producers Association.

Illinois Pork Producers Association, Indiana Pork Producers Association, Iowa Pork Producers Association, Kansas Pork Association, Kentucky Pork Producers Association, Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation, Louisiana Pork Producers Association, Louisiana Rice Producers Group, Michigan Agribusiness, Michigan Pork Producers Association, Minnesota Pork Producers Association, Mississippi Farm Bureau, Mississippi Pork Producers Association, Missouri Pork Association, Montana Pork Producers Council, National Animal Interest Alliance, National

Association of State Departments of Agriculture, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, National Christmas Tree Association, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, National Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association of America.

National Grain and Feed Association, National Milk Producers Federation, National Pork Producers Council, National Potato Council, National Sorghum Producers, National Treasury Employees Union, National Turkey Federation, Nebraska Pork Producers Association, Inc., North American Meat Institute, North American Renderers Association, North Carolina Pork Council, North Dakota Pork Council, Northeast Dairy Farmers Cooperatives, Northwest Chicken Council, Oklahoma Pork Council, Oregon Dairy Farmers Association, Oregon Pork Producers, Oregon Women for Agriculture, Pennsylvania Pork Producers Council, Pet Food Institute.

Rural & Agriculture Council of America, South Dakota Pork Producers Council, Tennessee Pork Producers Association, Texas Broiler Council, Texas Citrus Mutual, Texas Egg Council, Texas International Produce Association, Texas Pork Producers Association, Texas Poultry Federation, Texas Rice Producers Legislative Group, Texas Turkey Federation, United Egg Producers, United Fresh Produce Association, United States Cattlemen's Association, United States Chamber of Commerce, USA Rice Federation, Utah Pork Producers, Virginia Pork Council, Inc., Washington State Dairy Federation, Washington State Potato Commission, Wisconsin Pork Association.

Mr. VELA. The U.S. agriculture sector is crucial to our economy and generates more than \$1 trillion in annual economic activity.

In 2017, Texas farms sold \$24.9 billion in agricultural products, a significant contribution to the State's economy. However, with increasing levels of trade, threats to the United States' agricultural sector are growing. Foreign pests and diseases cost our economy tens of billions of dollars per year.

Agricultural specialists at our ports of entry intercept thousands of invasive pests and prevent the introduction of foreign animal diseases, such as the African swine fever, into the United States, protecting our natural resources and our economy.

Unfortunately, a shortage of agricultural specialists exists at our U.S. ports of entry, which is why this legislation is so important. This bill would ensure that we have enough agricultural specialists, technicians, and K-9 teams to adequately perform agricultural quarantine inspections at our international ports of entry.

I ask my colleagues to support swift passage of the Protecting America's Food and Agriculture Act of 2019. I thank my colleague, Senator PETERS, for his collaboration on this crucial bill and our Texas colleagues in the Senate, Senators CORNYN and CRUZ, and Representative CRENSHAW for their leadership in this effort.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. HAGEDORN).

Mr. HAGEDORN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Protecting America's Food and

Agriculture Act. I think this bill is a great example of how the House can work together, particularly across committee lines. Here, we have Homeland Security Committee and Agriculture Committee folks working together in the House and the Senate.

This is a critical piece of legislation in order to make sure we do everything possible to protect our food supply, our farmers, and agribusiness.

I have been focused very intently on this whole African swine fever threat for many months. When you look at it in China, it has ravaged their hog supply. Literally, over 50 percent of the hogs in China have had to be slaughtered because of it.

That disease has moved to Thailand, Vietnam, and the Philippines. It is in Poland, moving toward Germany and the European Union. It is an incredible threat, and it has caused a lot of destruction.

In my district in southern Minnesota, I happen to represent some of the finest agricultural producers in all the world, including livestock producers and many in pork production. Our district is number two in the whole country for pork production.

When you look at what is going on with African swine fever, it is obviously both an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity is that there is going to be a need for our products—our pork supply, poultry, and other things. Our producers are going to have a chance to export around the world, perhaps even enhance and expand their operations.

Of course, the challenge is: What happens if the African swine fever gets in the United States? If African swine fever enters the United States, it is not going to hurt just our pork producers. It is going to hurt our corn and soybean growers, and the people who pack the meat, transport the meat, all the people down the line to Main Street. It is going to drive up the prices for our consumers, and we can't let that happen.

That is why this bill is so important, to enhance the inspectors at these ports of entry and to make sure that the Beagle Brigades, as they are called, are upgraded. They do a terrific job of sniffing out the pork.

I completely support this legislation, and I would ask my colleagues to consider this thought in the future, of perhaps putting together a task force between the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Homeland Security to make sure that they are working in cooperation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. HAGEDORN. Mr. Speaker, I think a task force would be great, in order to make sure that these Departments are coordinating and working together. Then we in the Congress can interact with them in a better fashion.

We have to do every last thing we can to protect our food production and our American agricultural producers from this and other infectious diseases. I encourage everyone to support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Protecting America's Food and Agriculture Act.

Agriculture is key to southern Minnesota's economy, but a shortage of Agricultural inspectors at America's ports of entries puts our production at risk from infectious diseases.

African Swine Fever has torn through China's hog population and is currently spreading throughout Europe and Asia—with recent outbreaks reported in the Philippines and Greece.

Foreign Ag Diseases like the High Path Avian Influenza outbreak in 2014 cost the poultry industry \$1.6 billion. Foreign Ag Diseases affect the whole food supply chain, reducing demand and prices for crops like corn and soybeans, and increasing the price of food at the supermarket.

With the recent outbreak of the Coronavirus, it is critical that we protect our American food and agriculture from pests and foreign-born diseases, so that we can continue to supply high quality products around the world.

Our farmers are ready to meet this challenge. Minnesota's agriculture exports skyrocketed by 263 percent in the past ten years. And pork products alone account for 10 percent of all Minnesota Ag exports, therefore an outbreak of the ASF would have a significant impact on our economy.

This legislation will help CBP acquire the necessary resources to hire, train and assign agricultural specialists and support staff for canine teams that will detect and prevent the spread of ASF and other foreign-born diseases at our ports of entry. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this bill in the name of protecting our food supply.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. TORRES SMALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, agricultural inspectors at our ports of entry play a vital role in protecting one of the most important things there is: the food we eat.

This bill will help protect every American as they sit down at the dinner table. I commend my colleagues, Congressman VELA and Senator PETERS, for their work on this important bipartisan legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. TORRES SMALL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 2107.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SECURING AMERICA'S PORTS ACT

Ms. TORRES SMALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5273) to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a plan to increase to 100