

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

June 18, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Perdue:

We write to request your assistance in rectifying a growing problem with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS) Agricultural Quarantine Inspection (AQI) treatment monitoring fee. Currently, these fees disproportionately affect ports in our state because they are assessed on a per-treatment basis, regardless of the volume of goods treated.

For example, 300 pallets treated simultaneously in a Philadelphia warehouse would incur one AQI charge of \$142, while 300 pallets treated simultaneously in 15 shipping containers in Florida would cost \$2,130. Both methods would use the same amount of fumigation product and take the same amount of fumigation time, yet the resulting fees for ports in Florida would be 15 times higher than those paid by ports in the Northeast.

We recognize the critical importance of APHIS inspections to protecting U.S. agriculture, but USDA also has a responsibility to ensure AQI treatment monitoring is equitable and does not advantage some U.S. ports at the expense of others. To that end, we would like to draw your attention to the following report language included in the Senate's Fiscal Year 2019 Agriculture Appropriations bill:

*"The Committee notes that assessing AQI treatment monitoring fees on a per-enclosure basis imposes disproportionate impacts on industry and user groups at certain key ports of entry, including ports along the southeast United States. USDA is encouraged to continue conducting a study that specifically outlines the actual costs of treatments, examines the disproportionate impact the fee has on airports and seaports in different regions of the U.S., and evaluates alternative and equitable funding mechanisms. Such report should also incorporate due consideration of the recommendations of the Treatment Fee Working Group's September 27, 2016 "Report to APHIS". USDA shall brief the Committee on the status of such study and other efforts to ensure equitable collection of revenues for vital AQI treatment monitoring efforts."*

We ask that USDA continue to review the current method of applying AQI treatment monitoring fees and identify a more equitable approach. We consider this a time-sensitive issue because the treatment monitoring fees are scheduled to increase on January 1, 2019 to \$190 per enclosure,

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and will increase to \$237 per enclosure in 2020. We look forward to your assistance in addressing this issue.

Sincerely,



Bill Nelson  
Member of Congress



Marco Rubio  
Member of Congress



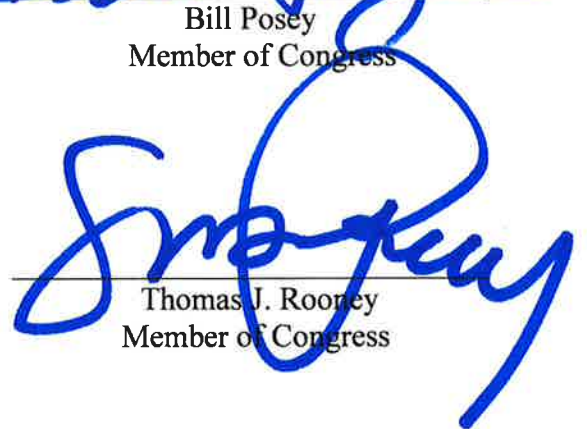
Frederica S. Wilson M.C.  
Member of Congress



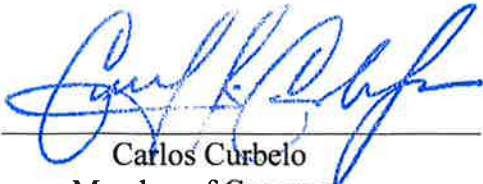
Bill Posey  
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress



Thomas J. Rooney  
Member of Congress



Carlos Curbelo  
Member of Congress




Theodore E. Deutch  
Member of Congress

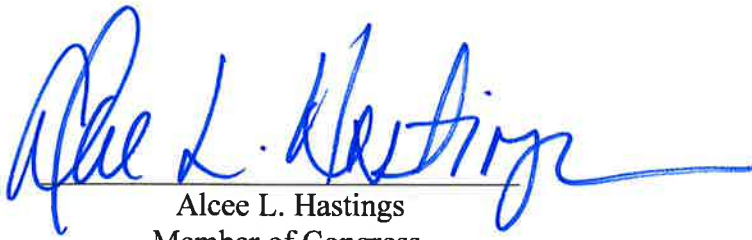
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