

May 15, 2023

Hon. Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Room S-221, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Room S-230, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. Kevin McCarthy
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Hon. Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Speaker McCarthy, and Leader Jeffries:

The undersigned groups request your support for swift passage of S. 759/H.R. 1480, *Beagle Brigade Act of 2023*, a bill authorizing the National Detector Dog Training Center (the “Center”). The Center is the primary training facility for the so-called “Beagle Brigade,” which helps protect America’s natural resources and agriculture producers from foreign animal and plant diseases and pests.

The \$1 trillion U.S. agriculture sector is a key component of the American economy and is fundamental to our national security. The introduction of foreign animal and plant pests and diseases costs the American economy tens of billions of dollars annually. The Agriculture Canine Teams of the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) perform critically important agricultural inspections at the nation’s ports of entry. These teams play a vital role in trade and travel safety, and work every day to prevent the introduction of harmful foreign animal and plant diseases and pests into the U.S. The introduction of foreign animal diseases, such as Foot and Mouth Disease, African Swine Fever, or virulent Newcastle Disease, or plant diseases, such as maize lethal necrosis or citrus greening disease, would have a devastating impact on U.S. agricultural producers, their communities, and the economy if introduced into the U.S.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) trains these dogs and their CBP handlers at the National Detector Dog Training Center in Newnan, Georgia. These specially trained teams are utilized by CBP to sniff out potentially contaminated products at U.S ports of entry, and prevent their introduction into the U.S. The Center also oversees the private adoption of retirement-age trained dogs and dogs that do not complete training. Congress has consistently supported this work, including through the passage of the *Protecting America’s Food and Agriculture Act of 2019*, which authorized the training of additional canine teams. The Beagle Brigade Act would provide specific authorization for this highly successful training center and lay the groundwork for its continued success in the future. It would also require a report from USDA on current and emerging threats to domestic agriculture and natural resources and improvements that could be made through the Center to minimize these threats.

We ask Congress to support the National Detector Dog Training Center and the important work done by the Agriculture Canine Teams at our 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 support S. 759/H.R. 1480.

Respectfully submitted,

American Association of Swine Veterinarians	Maritime Exchange for the Delaware River and Bay
American Association of Avian Pathologists	Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals – Multistate Initiative
American Association of Bovine Practitioners	National Animal Interest Alliance
American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases	National Aquaculture Association
American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians	National Association of Federal Veterinarians
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges	National Association of Maritime Organizations
American Dairy Coalition	National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
American Dairy Science Association	National Cattlemen’s Beef Association
American Farm Bureau Federation	National Cotton Council
American Feed Industry Association	National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
American Horse Council	National Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association of America
American Quarter Horse Association	National Farmers Union
American Seed Trade Association	National Grain and Feed Association
American Sheep Industry Association	National Institute for Animal Agriculture
American Soybean Association	National Milk Producers Federation
American Veterinary Medical Association	National Oilseed Processors Association
AmericanHort	National Pork Producers Council
Animal Health Institute	National Treasury Employees Union
Animal Transportation Association	National Turkey Federation
Association of Ship Brokers & Agents (USA)	North America Meat Institute
Association of Veterinary Biologics Companies	North American Deer Farmers Association
Border Trade Alliance	North American Renderers Association
California Citrus Mutual	North Carolina Farm Bureau
California Farm Bureau	Pet Food Institute
Farm Credit Council	Texas International Produce Association
FASS	United States Animal Health Association
Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association	U.S. Cattlemen’s Association
Fresh Produce Association of the Americas	United Egg Producers
International Fresh Produce Association	US Dairy Forage Research Center Stakeholder Committee
	Western Growers