



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

September 20, 2022

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

The Honorable Kevin Shea
Administrator
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack and Administrator Shea,

We write to you today to express deep concern for the continued rapid spread of the Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) through the Northeast and Northwest regions of the U.S., and now the Midwest, and the subsequent hardship faced by our nation's hop and grape growers who see firsthand the devastating impact this invasive species can have on entire harvests. We are grateful for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) efforts to address the spread of SLF in Pennsylvania. However, given the uncontrolled spread of the SLF beyond southeast Pennsylvania and the surrounding regions, we believe a greater national effort is urgently needed to protect our nation's agriculture.

The SLF has the potential to wreak havoc on agriculture producers throughout the United States and has a particularly devastating impact on the growing of grapes, hops, apples, and cucumbers. These large planthoppers are especially prone to feeding on grapevines, and as swarm feeders, the SLF can quickly overwhelm a grapevine resulting in weakened plants, reduced production, and even vine death. In addition to their feeding habits, the SLF releases excessive amounts of a sugary substance referred to as "honeydew." Not only does this excrement tend to blanket surrounding surfaces in the sticky honeydew substance, but it can cause the growth of sooty mold, both of which can be an incredible nuisance to growers and homeowners.

In Pennsylvania alone, an economic impact study estimated that without targeted efforts, the SLF could cost the state \$324 million annually and more than 2,800 jobs. While Pennsylvania has been the hardest hit since the invasive species arrived in 2014, a growing number of states, including Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Virginia, and West Virginia have experienced significant infestations. In 2022, Michigan, North Carolina, and Indiana also reported their first infestations, providing further confirmation that

these invasive planthoppers are rapidly spreading across great distances, and immediate action is necessary.

We applaud previous efforts by the USDA and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to contain the spread of SLF. However, the rate at which the SLF continues to spread across the country, the impact it has already had on the livelihood of so many American agricultural growers, and the potential devastation the SLF could wreak on our nation's farmers clearly show that much more needs to be done.

We urge you to take immediate steps to allocate increased funding and resources toward national and state efforts to eradicate the spread of SLF. Additionally, we recommend that the USDA increase outreach efforts to those states with confirmed infestations, as well as neighboring at-risk states, to ensure state and local governments have the support and information needed to track and mitigate the spread of the SLF.

It is imperative that we address and contain this spread in order to protect the livelihoods of our nation's farmers from undue harm. Please provide an update on your current planned federal efforts to contain the spread of the SLF, including your strategy to coordinate with state and local governments. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. We look forward to your expeditious response.

Sincerely,



Joseph D. Morelle
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



John Katko
Member of Congress



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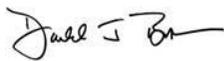
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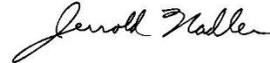
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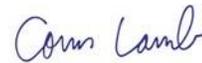


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