

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 27, 2021

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We write today to express concerns about the recent positive cases of African Swine Fever that were confirmed in pigs in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. In response, we urge you to take immediate action—including the use of transfer authority—to ensure that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has the funds necessary to prevent African Swine Fever from spreading to the U.S. and prepare for emergency response efforts should an outbreak occur in the U.S. hog population.

As you know, Haiti recently recorded its first confirmed case of the virus. The spread of African Swine Fever to Haiti from neighboring Dominican Republic has rightfully left Minnesota pig farmers nervous about the virus spreading to the continental United States. We know you understand the seriousness of the situation. While African Swine Fever is not a threat to human health, an outbreak in the U.S. would be economically devastating for our state's pork production, which is the second largest in the nation.

We appreciate the actions already taken by APHIS to prohibit entry of pork and pork products from both countries, increase surveillance efforts in U.S. territories, and coordinate with interagency partners like the Department of Homeland Security's Customs and Border Protection (CBP), but more needs to be done to protect against catastrophic losses to pork producers, pork exports, and our food supply chain. The confirmed cases have shown that we need to be doing everything we can to prevent catastrophic disease outbreaks before they start, and if we do have an outbreak, we need to be prepared.

We urge you to take immediate action—including the use of transfer authority—to ensure that APHIS has the funds necessary to protect the U.S. hog population.

Thank you again for your consideration of our request. We look forward to working with you to ensure a healthy and vibrant pork industry for years to come.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator