

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 16, 2016

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi:

We urge you to act to protect people in the United States, including American Indians, from the urgent threat of the emerging Zika virus. In recent days, the Zika virus has been detected in the *Aedes albopictus* mosquito, which has a large habitat range within the continental United States. This fact underscores the need for immediate action – further delay puts pregnant women and their unborn children at risk.

Tribal communities are among the most at-risk for tick- and mosquito-borne diseases. They are already disproportionately impacted by Rocky Mountain spotted fever and West Nile virus. The risk of new vector-borne diseases being introduced into tribal communities on the U.S.-Mexico border is high. While Indian Health Services (IHS) has identified vector-borne disease control as one of its national priorities, it does not currently have the staffing or resources to undertake needed control operations. Currently, tribes are eligible to apply for Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) grants from the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) Division of Vector-Borne Diseases (DVBD), but they do not qualify for funding due to lack of required laboratory or epidemiology capability.

An emergency funding supplemental to address this health crisis should be brought to a vote without further delay. This legislation should include dedicated and sustained funding streams, in parity with states, for vector control in tribal communities. Additionally, tribes should be made eligible for grants to establish locally managed vector control programs. Entities with a history of high incidences of vector-borne disease should be priority recipients. Mosquitos and other vectors do not respect political boundaries. If tribal communities cannot protect themselves from Zika and other vector-borne diseases, then the entire nation is at risk.

Refusal to protect our nation in the face of a public health emergency is not an option. Every moment of delay makes the United States, our territories already struggling with this dangerous virus, and our tribal communities even more susceptible.

Sincerely,


Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress


Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress

Brad Ashford

Brad Ashford
Member of Congress

G. K. Butterfield

G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas

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Judy Chu

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Bonnie Watson Coleman

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Alan Grayson

Alan Grayson
Member of Congress

Michelle Lujan Grisham

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress

Luis V. Gutiérrez

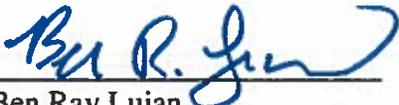
Luis V. Gutiérrez
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Dan Kildee
Member of Congress



John Lewis
Member of Congress



Ben Ray Lujan
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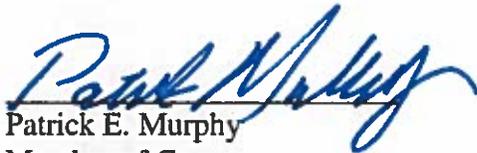
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Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
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Eleanor Holmes Norton
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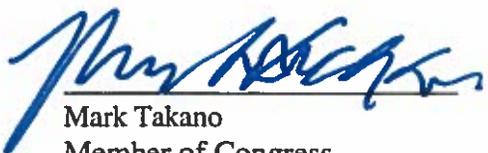
Raul Ruiz
Member of Congress



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Kyrsten Sinema
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Mark Takano
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