

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2309

April 4, 2014

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

I write to urge you to take action to address the devastating effect of the Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea (PED) virus on our domestic pork industry. As you know, since May 2013, the virus has spread to at least 26 states and caused the death of approximately 4 million young pigs. Pigs under a week old exhibit an alarming near-100 percent post-infection mortality rate.

The outbreak and spread of this disease is having severe economic consequences for producers, processors, and the men and women who work throughout the industry. If this problem persists, consumers will face increasingly high costs for pork products at grocery stores.

I therefore urge you to enhance disease detection capabilities for the virus; take measures to prevent its further spread; and strengthen efforts aimed at developing countermeasures, such as drugs and vaccines. In addition, I respectfully ask that you use any existing authority to provide relief and assistance to those impacted by the virus. Finally, I urge you to engage your counterparts throughout the federal government to leverage additional expertise and resources in order to effectively address this crisis.

Thank you for your prompt consideration of these requests. If you have questions, do not hesitate to contact me, or Ali Nouri at (202) 224-5641 on my staff.

Sincerely,



Al Franken
United States Senator