

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1079

To establish an interagency working group to develop a comprehensive, strategic plan to control locust outbreaks in the East Africa region and address future outbreaks in order to avert mass scale food insecurity and potential political destabilization, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 15, 2021

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself and Ms. BASS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To establish an interagency working group to develop a comprehensive, strategic plan to control locust outbreaks in the East Africa region and address future outbreaks in order to avert mass scale food insecurity and potential political destabilization, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Desert Locust Control
5 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

2 It is the policy of the United States to prioritize ef-
3 forts to control the ongoing desert locust outbreak in East
4 Africa and other affected regions, mitigate the impacts on
5 food security, economic productivity, and political sta-
6 bility, improve interagency coordination to prevent future
7 outbreaks, and promote resilience in affected countries.

8 **SEC. 3. FINDINGS.**

9 Congress finds the following:

10 (1) The United States Agency for International
11 Development reports that countries in East Africa
12 are currently suffering the worst desert locust out-
13 break in decades, which will devour crops and pas-
14 ture and destroy local livelihoods across the region.

15 (2) As of December 2020, the Food and Agri-
16 culture Organization reported that there were 42
17 million people experiencing acute food insecurity in
18 East Africa, which numbers are projected to in-
19 crease if the desert locust outbreak is not controlled.

20 (3) The desert locust outbreak in East Africa,
21 particularly in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia, is neg-
22 atively impacting food security, local livelihoods and
23 economic productivity, and may threaten political
24 stability in the region.

25 (4) Proactive investments now to control the
26 desert locust outbreak could reduce the need for a

1 much larger United States humanitarian response
2 effort later, as well as support economic and political
3 stability and build resilience in affected countries.

4 (5) In order to optimize the United States re-
5 sponse to the desert locust outbreak, an interagency
6 working group should be established to develop and
7 implement a comprehensive, strategic plan to control
8 the desert locust outbreak in East Africa and other
9 affected regions, mitigate impacts on food security,
10 economic productivity, and political stability and
11 prevent future outbreaks.

12 **SEC. 4. INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP.**

13 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The President shall establish
14 an interagency working group to coordinate the United
15 States response to the ongoing desert locust outbreak in
16 East Africa and other affected regions, including the de-
17 velopment of a comprehensive, strategic plan to control the
18 outbreak, mitigate the impacts on food security, economic
19 productivity, and political stability, and prevent future
20 outbreaks.

21 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—The interagency working
23 group shall be composed of the following:

24 (A) Two representatives from the United
25 States Agency for International Development.

1 (B) One representative from each of the
2 following:

3 (i) The United States Mission to the
4 United Nations Agencies for Food and Ag-
5 riculture.

6 (ii) The National Security Council.

7 (iii) The Department of State.

8 (iv) The Department of Defense.

9 (v) The Department of Agriculture.

10 (vi) Any other relevant Federal de-
11 partment or agency.

12 (2) CHAIR.—The President shall designate one
13 of the representatives from the United States Agen-
14 cy for International Development described in para-
15 graph (1)(A) to serve as chair of the interagency
16 working group.

17 (c) DUTIES.—The interagency working group shall—

18 (1) assess the scope of the desert locust out-
19 break in East Africa and other affected regions, in-
20 cluding its impact on food security, economic pro-
21 ductivity, and political stability in affected countries;

22 (2) assess the impacts of restrictions relating to
23 the coronavirus disease 2019 (commonly referred to
24 as “COVID–19”) pandemic;

1 (3) monitor the effectiveness of ongoing assist-
2 ance efforts to control the desert locust outbreak
3 and mitigate its impacts and identify gaps and op-
4 portunities for additional support to such programs;

5 (4) review the effectiveness of regional and mul-
6 tilateral efforts to control the desert locust outbreak
7 and the coordination among relevant United States
8 Government agencies, regional governments, and
9 international organizations, including the World
10 Food Programme and the United Nations Food and
11 Agriculture Organization; and

12 (5) not later than 90 days after the establish-
13 ment of the interagency working group under sub-
14 section (a), develop and submit to the President and
15 the appropriate congressional committees a com-
16 prehensive, strategic plan to control the desert locust
17 outbreak, including a description of efforts to—

18 (A) improve coordination among relevant
19 United States Government agencies, regional
20 governments, and international organizations,
21 including the World Food Programme and the
22 United Nations Food and Agriculture Organiza-
23 tion;

24 (B) ensure delivery of necessary assets
25 control the desert locust outbreak and humani-

1 tarian and development assistance to address
2 and mitigate impacts to food security, economic
3 productivity, and political stability; and

4 (C) to the extent practicable, prevent and
5 mitigate future desert locust and other, similar
6 destructive insect outbreaks (such as Fall
7 Armyworm) in Africa and other parts of the
8 world, which require a humanitarian response.

9 (d) INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP SUPPORT.—The
10 interagency working group shall continue to meet not less
11 than semi-annually to facilitate implementation of the
12 comprehensive, strategic plan required by subsection
13 (c)(5).

14 (e) SUNSET.—This section shall terminate on the
15 date that is 2 years after the date of the enactment of
16 this Act, or at such time as there is no longer an upsurge
17 in the desert locust outbreak in East Africa, whichever oc-
18 curs earlier.

19 (f) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DE-
20 FINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate congres-
21 sional committees” means—

22 (1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the
23 Committee on Appropriations of the House of Rep-
24 resentatives; and

- 1 (2) the Committee on Foreign Relations and
- 2 the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

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