

**SERESTO FLEA AND TICK COLLARS:
EXAMINING WHY A PRODUCT LINKED TO
MORE THAN 2,500 PET DEATHS
REMAINS ON THE MARKET**

HEARING

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND CONSUMER
POLICY
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND REFORM

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Wednesday, June 15, 2022

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND CONSUMER POLICY,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 1:35 p.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Raja Krishnamoorthi (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Krishnamoorthi, Porter, Bush, Johnson, DeSaulnier, Brown, Cloud, Keller, Franklin, Clyde, and Donalds.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. The committee will come to order.

Without objection, the chair is authorized to declare a recess of the committee at any time.

I welcome everyone to today's hearing, the title of which is "Seresto Flea and Tick Collars: Examining Why a Product Linked to More Than 2,500 Pet Deaths Remains on the Market."

I now recognize myself for an opening statement.

At the inaugural hearing of this subcommittee in 2019, I noted it was created to focus on economic opportunity and fairness, consumer health and safety, and the overall quality of life. That's why our activities included investigations into price gouging in the shipping and food sectors, the infant formula shortage, neurotoxins in baby food, workplace harassment, the youth vaping epidemic, and, especially relevant now, inflation and rising prices.

Today we're delving into the question of consumer safety, as well as overall quality of life, by examining why a product linked to numerous pet deaths and other negative side effects remains on the market. That product is Elanco Corporation's Seresto flea and tick collar.

Today, our subcommittee has released its report on the Seresto collar and how both Elanco and the EPA, which regulates the Seresto collar, failed to address Seresto's known and deadly risks. As early as 2015, just a few years after the collar entered the U.S. market, an EPA investigation found that among similar products the Seresto collar, quote, "ranked No. 1 by a wide margin in terms of total incidents, major incidents, and deaths," even after factoring in companies' relative sales.

Those findings weren't enough to drive the makers of the Seresto collar or the EPA to act. But, in 2016, Canada's equivalent of the

EPA, known as the PMRA, concluded, based on a review of the same American data available to the EPA, that the collar posed too great a risk to pets and their owners to be ever sold in Canada.

Unfortunately, even as the death count rose, the EPA allowed Seresto to remain on the market here without even so much as requiring additional warning labels that regulators mandated in places ranging from Australia to Colombia to the European Union.

The companies that manufactured the Seresto collar, first Bayer Animal Health and then later Elanco, were also aware of the risks, the incidents, and the deaths. But they too failed to act.

Instead, they hired third-party industry insiders to conduct so-called “independent reviews” of the incident data, which ended up protecting their \$300 million a year market but ended up endangering pets. So, the Seresto collar stayed the same, and so did the consequences.

Today, we’ll hear from witnesses who can speak about the Seresto collar, the failures of Bayer, Elanco, and the EPA, and the real costs of their collective choices. We’ll also hear from the families of pets that wore the collars and suffered the ultimate consequences.

As our witnesses today will testify, there is no perfect, risk-free way of keeping our pets safe from every possible source of harm. That’s the sad reality. But it is still possible to do all we can to protect the health and well-being of every pet.

Sadly, our investigation has found evidence that the EPA and Elanco have failed to live up to that standard. That’s why today I’m calling on the EPA to initiate Notice of Intent to Cancel proceedings, which will ensure that a comprehensive review of Seresto and its risks is undertaken to determine what must be done.

And, in the meantime, to protect pets from further harm, I’m renewing my call for Elanco to do what the EPA cannot do immediately, and that’s to institute a voluntary recall of the Seresto collar until comprehensive safety testing can be completed.

Now, folks, this particular collar has caused 100,000 incidents reported to the EPA and over 2,500 pet deaths reported to the EPA. The steps that we are asking for today are crucial because it’s important to protect our pets and our families too.

I now call upon my distinguished colleague, Mr. Cloud, for his opening statement.

Mr. CLOUD. Thank you, Chairman.

This is the first hearing of the Economic and Consumer Policy Subcommittee this year, and we’ve been in session for 52 days this year, and our first hearing is on pet collars.

And I do realize that our pets are a huge part of our lives. They enrich our families. They provide companionship. For my kids, they have helped foster responsibility and compassion and care, important ethics we need in our society. Just recently, our family mourned the loss of our guinea pig, Biscuit. And so, pets are a huge part of our family lives.

But I have to admit that when I saw that this was going to be on the agenda for this week, I could not help but be concerned, especially coming from south Texas, about the thousands, tens of thousands of human lives that have passed away due to fentanyl

and due to an open border and due to the policies of this administration to continue to aid and abet cartels.

And I realize that this is the Economic and Consumer Policy Subcommittee, and so I think about economic policy happening right now and where the minds of the American people are.

Gas is now averaging \$5 a gallon nationwide for the first time in history. We have not had a hearing.

Inflation is at a 40-year high. We have not had a hearing.

The American people cannot find baby formula. We still haven't had a hearing.

I've mentioned fentanyl is killing Americans, especially our teens, at unprecedented rates. We have not had a hearing.

Biden's systemic elimination of the safe and secure border he inherited has led to the worst humanitarian and national security crisis in this country's history. We have not had a hearing this term.

We could talk about how inflation is affecting the cost of owning a pet, including the increased costs of food, toys, accessories, but we're not talking about that either.

Instead, we're holding a hearing on the pet collar, which fights fleas and ticks. And as any pet owner knows, flea and tick management is an essential part of pet care, but I'm not sure it's an essential part of congressional oversight, especially when we take in mind where the American people are at.

And, frankly, I've talked to a number of people in my district and others who live in other parts of the country, and they are really surprised that this has risen to one of the top priorities of Congress at this time and juncture.

The subcommittee Republicans would rather explore efforts to help American consumers during these trying times. We would gladly have joined the chairman in holding a hearing on the shortage of baby formula.

Moreover, we have welcomed the chance to explore TikTok's troubling practice of showing dangerous content to minors, an investigation that you all started last year.

In fact, it's now come to light that teenagers are using TikTok and other social media platforms to purchase illicit drugs, including, unknowingly in many cases—in most cases—fentanyl, while social media platforms are also using it to recruit young people into the gig economy of human trafficking. A hearing on that crisis could be incredibly important.

And on the subject of our Nation's youth, CDC bureaucrats have actively pursued an agenda to close schools during the pandemic instead of following the science, damaging our children's financial, mental, physical, emotional, and also their learning for years to come. But we still have not had a hearing.

Americans are facing incredible economic issues which require us as elected officials to listen and to respond.

I do appreciate the fact that our pets play an important part of our lives. We should be kind to animals, and we should teach our children to do the same.

But I do care immensely more about the human lives that we were elected to serve, and right now we have troubling economic times, with many families having to decide between food and fuel,

with many families who saved up their entire lives to buildup a life savings, thinking they might have enough to make it by month to month, only finding out that inflation has put an unbearable demand on meeting those needs.

These are important things and, frankly, where the minds of the American people are right now.

And I have to say, as someone who was sent here to serve the American people, I know that the American people are bewildered that we're having this hearing, and that this is one of the top topics in Congress right now with where we're at. And I know the people who elected me to serve would prefer we be spending time on other important issues at this juncture.

And so, with that, I would move to adjourn.

Mr. DONALDS. Mr. Chair, a question has been called as a motion from the vice chairman. What's going on?

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Thank you, Mr. Donalds.

The gentleman has moved to adjourn, and the motion is not debatable.

All those in favor of the motion to adjourn, say aye.

Those opposed, say no.

In the opinion of the chair, the noes have it, and the motion to adjourn is not agreed to.

Mr. KELLER. Could we do that again? I thought I only heard one no.

Mr. CLOUD. Request a recorded vote.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. OK. Very good.

A recorded vote has been requested. We will pause while we will get the clerk out.

[Discussion off the record.]

Mr. DONALDS. Mr. Chairman, it's already been about, what, a minute and a half? Where's the clerk? Is the clerk on lunch and not here today?

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. The clerk is on the way, Mr. Donalds. Thank you.

Mr. DONALDS. Is the clerk sitting in a side office just hanging out? I mean, come on, Mr. Chairman.

OK. America, we don't really get a lot of answers up here. Don't be surprised.

Mr. CLOUD. Could we alternatively provide a teller from each side to count the votes?

Mr. KELLER. There's not enough people to vote no.

Mr. CLOUD. There aren't that many of us.

Mr. KELLER. I'm virtually, and I only heard one no during the whole call.

Mr. CLOUD. Perhaps staff from each side could.

Mr. DONALDS. All right. Parliamentary question, Mr. Chairman. If we don't have enough members to vote here and the clerk is not here, how do we convene a hearing in Congress without a quorum?

Mr. KELLER. Yes.

Ms. PORTER. Madam Chair, how am I recorded?

Mr. KELLER. You're not recorded because we didn't call the roll yet.

Mr. CLOUD. Point of information. Does this require a clerk or is this a matter of personal preference?

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Yes, the clerk is required for a vote.
 [Discussion off the record.]
 Mr. CLYDE. Mr. Chairman, by chance is the clerk teleworking?
 Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Sorry? Say that again, please.
 Mr. CLYDE. Is the clerk teleworking perhaps today?
 Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. The clerk is teleworking?
 Mr. CLYDE. Teleworking. Yes, teleworking. Is that the holdup?
 Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. I don't know, Mr. Clyde. I think she's on the way. Thank you.
 Mr. CLYDE. OK. Thank you.
 Mr. KELLER. They're rounding up members.
 [Discussion off the record.]
 Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. OK. Madam Clerk, will you please call the roll on this motion to adjourn?
 The CLERK. Mr. Krishnamoorthi?
 Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. No.
 The CLERK. Mr. Krishnamoorthi votes no.
 Ms. Porter?
 Ms. PORTER. No. Ms. Porter votes no.
 The CLERK. Ms. Porter votes no.
 Ms. Bush?
 Ms. BUSH. Bush votes no.
 The CLERK. Ms. Bush votes no.
 Ms. Speier?
 [No response.]
 The CLERK. Mr. Johnson?
 Mr. JOHNSON. Johnson votes no.
 The CLERK. Mr. Johnson votes no.
 Mr. DeSaulnier?
 Mr. DESAULNIER. DeSaulnier votes no.
 The CLERK. Mr. DeSaulnier votes no.
 Ms. Pressley?
 [No response.]
 The CLERK. Ms. Brown?
 Ms. BROWN. Brown votes no.
 The CLERK. Ms. Brown votes no.
 Mr. Cloud?
 Mr. CLOUD. Yes.
 The CLERK. Mr. Cloud votes yes.
 Mr. Keller?
 Mr. KELLER. Yes.
 The CLERK. Mr. Keller votes yes.
 Mr. Franklin?
 Mr. FRANKLIN. Aye.
 The CLERK. Mr. Franklin votes yes.
 Mr. Clyde?
 Mr. CLYDE. Yes.
 The CLERK. Mr. Clyde votes yes.
 Mr. Donalds?
 Mr. DONALDS. Yes.
 The CLERK. Mr. Donalds votes yes.
 Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Does any member wish to change his or her vote? If not, the clerk will report.
 The CLERK. On this vote, we have five yeas and six nays.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. The question is not agreed to.

Now I recognize our witnesses for their opening statements. I would like to introduce our witnesses first. We will have two witness panels today. I'll introduce the first panel now. The witnesses on this panel will not entertain questions following their testimony.

Our first witnesses are Ms. Faye Hemsley and her son, Mr. Omarion Hemsley, owners of the now deceased Tigger, a terrier mix.

Our second witness is Mr. Thomas Maiorino, owner of the now deceased Rooney, his family's rescue dog.

I will begin by swearing in the witnesses.

Please raise your right hands.

Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Let the record show that the witnesses answered in the affirmative.

Without objection, each of your written Statements will be made part of the record.

With that, Ms. Hemsley and Mr. Hemsley, you are now recognized to provide your testimony.

STATEMENT OF FAYE HEMSLEY, OWNER OF DECEASED PET

Ms. HEMSLEY. My name is Faye Hemsley and I live in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. I am the mother of two boys, Omarion and William.

I care deeply about animals and try to help them when I can. I regularly rescue dogs in my community.

Around 2008, I adopted a cute black and brown terrier mix that we named Tigger. Tigger became part of our family and regularly played with me and my children and the other dogs that we had. Tigger also would cuddle with me. We all loved Tigger.

In January 2020, I purchased a Seresto collar for Tigger. Because Seresto collars are expensive, I didn't purchase any Seresto flea collars for the other three dogs I had at the time.

Tigger was also lively and never suffered from any serious health problems, and so I put the Seresto collar around his neck to ward off fleas and ticks.

At first Tigger appeared fine. However, Tigger's head began to droop, and he did not have the same amount of energy he once did.

So after that, Tigger died in my son Omarion's arms when he was preparing to take Tigger for a walk. Tigger had a Seresto collar around his neck at the time of his death.

None of my other three dogs had the Seresto collar, and none of my other dogs got sick and died. I'm convinced that it was the Seresto collar that killed Tigger and that he did not—

[Witness crying.]

I'm sorry.

I'm convinced it was the Seresto collar that killed Tigger and if he did not have the collar, Tigger would still be alive today.

I read about an article about other dogs, other pets having suffered the same injuries because of the Seresto collar. As a result, I hired a lawyer.

I never can bring Tigger back, but I hope that by speaking here today, I can help other pets and their owners avoid what Tigger went through.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to tell you about my experience with Seresto collars and what happened to Tigger. We miss him every day and his cuddles he gave us.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Thank you, Ms. Hemsley. We are so sorry for your loss.

I now recognize Mr. Maiorino.

You may provide your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF THOMAS MAIORINO, OWNER OF DECEASED
PET**

Mr. MAIORINO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members, for hearing us about this important issue.

My name is Thomas Maiorino. I reside in Mount Laurel, New Jersey, with my wife, Monica. I am the father of three boys. My youngest son, Robert, turned 12 in 2011. After years of asking for a dog, he wore us down, and we decided to rescue a dog from a southern shelter for my son's birthday.

After researching online, we adopted a mixed breed mutt that Robbie and his two older brothers named Rooney. Rooney swiftly became a loved member of our family. A bit rambunctious, she was just what a 12-year-old boy needed. She loved to run and chase anything that moved in the yard.

By all measures, we took great care to ensure Rooney had a healthy and happy life. We took her on daily walks, sometimes three a day, hikes on park trails. We monitored her diet and made sure she was seen by the veterinarian as needed and she received all of her shots.

Because she was a bit rambunctious and we lived in a wooded area where there's a lot of wildlife, we were constantly concerned about the problems of fleas and ticks. We consulted with a veterinarian after getting Rooney to determine the best way to protect her against this.

We used a variety of prevention methods for the first few years. And when we changed veterinarians in approximately 2013 or 2014, the new veterinarian strongly recommended that we use the Seresto flea and tick collar based on all of our options.

We heeded that advice and purchased Seresto collars from our local PetSmart. The collars were intended to provide protection for up to eight months.

We noticed that after affixing the collar to Rooney's neck, she began to itch and at first had that treated and later tested for allergies. We took Rooney to the vet several times during 2018 seeking to find the cause for the ever-increasing itching.

After several visits and multiple medications, they were unable to determine the cause, and we switched to a specialist in 2019 to seek further assistance where they provided allergy shots and other medications to address the worsening itching and related symptoms.

Rooney's behavior then became more erratic as the months wore on. She began licking her paws so feverishly they would bleed. She also developed patches, bleeding patches on her stomach.

Ultimately, in October 2020, Rooney suffered a horrendous grand mal seizure in the presence of myself and my wife. The damage done by the seizure was irreversible. She was a shell of her former self. And, ultimately, the family decided the most humane thing would be to put Rooney to sleep at the age of nine.

In early March 2021, I read an article online about Seresto pet collars resulting in the deaths of 1,700 pets without any warnings from the EPA or the manufacturer. I sought out legal representation, not because I wanted financial compensation, but because I took great pain to care for Rooney.

The final 18 months of her life were agonizing to watch. If I could help prevent another family from going through what my family went through, I wanted to act.

I'm here today in furtherance of that effort. I appreciate the committee taking the time to investigate this matter. And thank you for your time.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Thank you, Mr. Maiorino, for your testimony. We are deeply sorry for your loss as well.

Mr. MAIORINO. Thank you.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. To all witnesses, thank you for your testimony. Panel one is now concluded, and you are released.

I now invite the witnesses appearing in person for the second panel to approach the witness table and ask the clerks to prepare the zoom for the witnesses appearing remotely as well.

Great. I would now like to introduce our second panel of witnesses. These witnesses will accept questions following their testimonies.

First, Mr. Jeffrey Simmons is the President and CEO of Elanco Animal Health, Inc., the current manufacturer of the Seresto flea and tick collar.

Second, Dr. Nathan Donley is the Environmental Health Science Director at the Center for Biological Diversity.

Third, Ms. Karen McCormack is retired from the EPA where she served for over 40 years in various positions, including as Scientist, Policy Analyst, and Communications Officer, including in the Office of Pesticide Programs.

Finally, our last witness is Ms. Carrie Sheffield, a columnist and Senior Policy Analyst at Independent Women's Voice.

Thank you all for being here today.

The witnesses appearing remotely will be unmuted so that we can swear everyone in.

I will now swear in the witnesses.

Please raise your right hands.

Do you swear or affirm that the testimony you are about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Let the record show that all the witnesses answered in the affirmative.

Thank you.

Without objection, your written statements will be made part of the record.

With that, Mr. Simmons, you are now recognized to provide your testimony.

STATEMENT OF JEFFREY SIMMONS, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, ELANCO ANIMAL HEALTH INCORPORATED

Mr. SIMMONS. Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman Krishnamoorthi, Ranking Member Cloud, and members of the subcommittee, my name is Jeff Simmons. I'm the president and CEO of Elanco Animal Health.

I joined Elanco 33 years ago directly out of college because of the company's culture and its commitment to make a difference in the lives of animals. Our company and our people are dedicated to protecting and enhancing the health of animals, which is why I appreciate the opportunity today to provide more details on our Seresto collar.

There are a few points I would like to emphasize up front.

First, the EPA approved Seresto following more than 80 safety and toxicity studies, all of which showed that Seresto and its ingredients have a strong safety profile.

Second, more than 80 regulatory bodies around the world have approved Seresto. Seresto is widely used in more than 80 million collars worn over the past decade to protect dogs and cats from fleas and ticks around the world.

Third, adverse event reports are not intended to be and, in fact, are absolutely not proof of causation. Reports require further investigation and analysis to determine cause. And after years of review, our pharmacovigilance team, made up of veterinarians and other experts who study adverse event reports, has not identified a single death caused by the active ingredients in the collar.

Finally, the benefits Seresto brings to pets and their owners are very significant and must be weighed against any risks. Seresto provides working families with 8 continuous months of protection against fleas and ticks in an affordable, easy to use collar available over the counter.

Fleas and ticks aren't just annoying. They can carry serious and potentially fatal diseases to pets and people, like Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever.

At Elanco, we understand the unique and loving bond pet owners have with their pets. And as someone who's always had dogs as part of our family, I share that bond.

This understanding drives our rigorous, science-backed approach to safety. We're committed to transparency and take adverse event reports, which we share with the EPA, very seriously.

At the same time, our decisions are guided by the best available scientific evidence, and that evidence provides robust support for the strong safety profile of Seresto.

Seresto was first approved by the EPA in 2012 following numerous toxicity studies, pharmacokinetic studies, safety studies, and laboratory and field efficacy studies.

Seresto's safety was studied in dogs and cats actually wearing the collars. Some pets wore up to five Seresto collars at a time. Yet the only treatment-related adverse effects seen in any of these studies were some local reactions caused by the physical nature of the collar.

The incident report data similarly supports Seresto's safety. We recognize the impression that can be left with viewing the total

number of incident reports without any context or analysis. But with 33 million collars sold in the United States alone, incident reports, most of which are minor or moderate, represent an extremely small proportion of the Seresto collars in use.

Moreover, incident reports are submitted to the EPA without regard to causation. The best scientific evidence available shows the overwhelming majority of reported major events not even possibly caused by Seresto's active ingredients.

No product is without risk. What matters is whether those risks are reasonable and in light of the benefits, and numerous studies and the incident report data for Seresto demonstrate, the product does not pose an unreasonable risk and has a strong safety profile, which is why the American Veterinary Medical Association opposed canceling Seresto's EPA registration.

The incidence of flea-and tick-borne diseases is on the rise. CDC estimates approximately 500,000 cases of Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever annually. Climate change may accelerate this trend.

Seresto offers pet owners a much-needed cost-effective option for protecting their pets and people as well. Given the robust scientific evidence for Seresto's strong safety profile, we are proud to stand behind the product.

Thank you very much for your time, and I look forward to your questions.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Thank you, Mr. Simmons.

Dr. Donley, you are now recognized to provide your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF NATHAN DONLEY, PH.D., CENTER FOR
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY**

Mr. DONLEY. Thank you.

Good morning—well, morning where I am, afternoon where you are—Chairman Krishnamoorthi, Ranking Member Cloud, and distinguished subcommittee members.

My name is Dr. Nathan Donley. I'm the Science Director for the Environmental Health Program at the Center for Biological Diversity. I have a Ph.D. in cell and developmental biology from Oregon Health and Sciences University.

The last seven years of my professional life have been spent researching how pesticides impact people and the environment and the regulatory failures that can actually facilitate harm rather than prevent it.

I've published three peer-reviewed scientific articles and five technical reports on this subject. I've authored over a hundred technical scientific comments to the EPA on pesticide documents, including for flumethrin and imidacloprid, the two active ingredients in the Seresto collar.

I've read through thousands of pages of FOIA documents I requested on matters related to the approval and continued use of Seresto.

And it's really important for this committee to understand that Seresto is the symptom of a much larger problem at EPA. It's simply one of the most egregious examples of what happens when the agency that is supposed to be making sure products that we encounter in our daily lives are safe is not up to the task.

Other than from the laboratory studies conducted by the pesticide companies themselves, the EPA actually knows very little about how pesticides will behave in the real world before they are approved, and this is why incident reporting by the public is essential to track pesticide impacts, and this is where EPA fails.

While other agencies, like the FDA, have robust systems in place to surveil harms from products under their purview, EPA only requires minimal information be submitted four times a year, and they delegate this responsibility to the pesticide industry itself.

The limited information that is collected includes only the pesticide product name, where the incident occurred, and the severity of the incident. That's it. Oftentimes the agency doesn't even know if the incident involves a dog or a cat.

Even though the EPA determines what incident information it collects, it then turns around and laments that the incident data are insufficient to take regulatory action to protect public health, the environment, and our pets. It's a system designed to achieve nothing other than maintaining the status quo.

Worse yet, reported incidents significantly underestimate the true scope of harm. The EPA recently estimated that only one in 25 pesticide incidents involving another pesticide called dicamba was actually reported to the authorities. That's only a four percent reporting rate.

Given that 100,000 people have reported their concerns about Seresto, this is very alarming because the true number of harmful incidents to pets could be potentially far higher.

The EPA's counterpart in Canada was so concerned about Seresto incidents and the harm to pets and humans that it denied Seresto approval in 2016. Canada analyzed U.S. incident data and determined that Seresto collars had an incident rate 50 times greater than the average flea collar and 36 times greater than Canada's trigger for review.

EPA has no trigger for review of any pesticide product, no matter how much harm is being reported. And because the agency has no mandated trigger for reviewing pesticides like Seresto, rather than choosing to use incident reporting data to inform a robust regulatory process and take dangerous products off the market, EPA routinely chooses to do nothing at all. That's especially troubling when you consider that Seresto is just one of 18,000 pesticide products currently approved by the EPA.

People are telling the authorities about the terrible things that happened to their pet or child. They deserve more than to have their reports ignored. Until the system changes, it's impossible to have any confidence that the EPA is actually protecting us, our children, and our pets from harmful pesticides.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to be here today and to speak on behalf of this important issue.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Thank you, Dr. Donley.

Ms. McCormack, you are now recognized to provide your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF KAREN MCCORMACK, FORMER SCIENTIST,
POLICY ANALYST, AND COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER (RET.),
OFFICE OF PESTICIDE PROGRAMS, ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION AGENCY**

Ms. MCCORMACK. Good afternoon, Chairman Krishnamoorthi, Ranking Member Cloud, and distinguished subcommittee members.

My name is Karen McCormack. At the present time, I am a retired government employee after working over 40 years at the Environmental Protection Agency.

During my career at EPA, I first worked in an EPA laboratory as a research coordinator, and in that capacity, I conducted research on numerous pesticides.

Later, I transferred to EPA's headquarters in Washington, DC, and worked in various positions in the pesticide program, as a Scientist, Policy Analyst, and a Communications Officer.

I also worked in a number of offices at EPA, including the Office of the Assistant Administrator for Pesticides and Toxics.

Although I'm retired from EPA, I'm still closely following a number of environmental topics, and one of those topics of interest to me has been the impact of flea and tick pet products on cats and dogs.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is charged with regulating products that contain pesticides and in ensuring that all pesticide products are safe to use. Before 1996, EPA did not consistently require manufacturers to conduct animal safety studies for pet products containing pesticides.

Because pet products with pesticides were available readily in commercial stores, consumers thought they must be safe.

This is not necessarily the case. Flea and tick products are designed to kill insects, and they often contain poisonous chemicals.

When combined with pesticides that are used outside the home and in the water and food that people drink and eat, the aggregate risks from all these sources of pesticides can be high, especially for children who are vulnerable to toxic chemicals, much more vulnerable than adults.

And it wasn't until the passage of the 1996 Food Quality Protection Act that EPA began to examine the risks from sources other than food, including risks from pet products containing pesticides.

After the passage of FQPA, pesticide manufacturers were required to submit to EPA animal safety studies and incident reports showing harm to animals and humans exposed to pesticides and pet products.

Between 2012 and the present time, the EPA received an increasing number of incident reports related to the use of flea and tick pet collars for dogs and cats. The toxic effects that were described in these many incident reports from the use of certain pet collars range from mild effects, such as skin irritation, to more severe effects, such as intense tremors, seizures, paralysis, organ failure, and death.

The largest number of incident reports that EPA received during this period were from the use of a pet collar called Seresto. Between January 2012 and the present time, EPA has received over 100,000 incident reports, and these incident reports include human

incidents as well as pet incidents. These reports also include at least 2,300 reports of pet deaths.

The number is most likely a very low estimate of the actual number of incidents that are occurring since many pet owners do not know that they can report incidents to EPA, and they may not know how to correlate the adverse effects in their pets with a particular pet product.

Determining the safety of pet products such as Seresto is very difficult for consumers and pet owners. There are no independent organizations that rank the safety of pet products, and the sales data which is needed to rank the safety of pet products is considered confidential business information by the manufacturers.

EPA's risk assessments also do not tell the full story of what pet products are safe as they rely heavily on industry-generated studies that were conducted on mice and rats rather than dogs and cats, and EPA's risk assessments also are based mainly on studies that were conducted with only one pesticide in Seresto rather than the combined pesticides in this pet product.

Although the original manufacturer of Seresto, Bayer, did conduct a number of efficacy and safety studies on dogs and cats treated with Seresto, the company did not conduct two very critical studies that are important for determining the safety of a pet product.

These tests include a pet transferrable residue study—a petting study—to determine the exposure of humans to Seresto, and they did not conduct a study that measures the amount of pesticide that gets in the blood of treated dogs and cats.

Both Bayer and Elanco have claimed that Seresto is safe for pets, and Bayer has claimed that the pesticides in Seresto remain on the outer surface of the animal's skin and hair coat.

An independent study conducted at Murray State University, though, found that one of the pesticides in Seresto, imidacloprid, can cross the skin barrier and enter the blood of treated pets.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Ms. McCormack, I'm sorry. We're out of time on your testimony. You can answer questions further about that.

I'd like to now recognize Ms. Sheffield for her five minutes of testimony.

**STATEMENT OF CARRIE SHEFFIELD (MINORITY WITNESS),
SENIOR POLICY ANALYST, INDEPENDENT WOMEN'S VOICE**

Ms. SHEFFIELD. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and other subcommittee members, thank you for inviting me to appear today.

My name is Carrie Sheffield, and I'm a Senior Policy Analyst at the Center for Economic Opportunity at Independent Women's Forum. We are a nonprofit organization committed to increasing the number of women who value free markets and personal liberty. We advance policies that advance people's freedom, opportunities, and well-being.

Before I begin my remarks, I would like to acknowledge the witnesses on the earlier panel. Their stories of losing beloved pets, who are family members in nearly every sense of the word, break our hearts.

As someone who grew up with beloved pets and cats in our family, I know how the unconditional love from our family pets is wonderful and life giving. If only we could all be half the human beings that are pets believe us to be.

My understanding is that this subcommittee launched its investigation into the collars in March 2021, following the publication of an investigative report about possible injuries and deaths related to this dog collar.

What is heartbreaking about this case is that we are almost a year and a half since the initial discovery, yet we don't have this issue resolved.

We are hearing from both sides about this issue today, and no matter what is decided here, this is clearly a case of government regulatory failure to provide clarity to the American people and our vulnerable furry friends.

This lack of clarity on pet collars is part of a widespread pattern of limited clarity throughout government. We're seeing it at the FDA in protecting our baby formula national supply chain, which is so critical for millions of families, and on top of that women nationwide are also reporting a shortage of tampons.

Sadly, what's happening right now is what some commentators are calling "The Great Distrust." We see in many instances Americans have lost their confidence in our political leaders and our institutions, from the EPA to the FBI and Congress, to public education, the CDC, and much more.

We see this lack of confidence in last week's overwhelming recall of San Francisco District Attorney Chesa Boudin, who refused to protect citizens and favored criminality over justice. What's telling is that reports indicate people of color rejected Boudin at higher rates than White voters. They know that defunding the police widens economic inequality by destroying the safety of businesses in minority communities.

These Black and Brown voters stood up and they pushed back. Their businesses and physical safety suffer most under a "defund the police" ethos, which is endorsed by some members of this subcommittee.

According to your website, this subcommittee has jurisdiction in part over the following areas: income inequality and policies that affect the growth and prosperity of the middle class, including education, housing, labor, trade, small business, agriculture, securities regulation, and consumer protection. Your last subcommittee hearing was held June 23, 2021, on youth e-cigarette use.

As mentioned previously, while my heart goes out to any pet owners that have lost a pet, besides dog collars and vaping there are a host of widespread problems plaguing the country that fall under the jurisdiction of this subcommittee. These vital issues have not been discussed to date.

If this committee was paying attention to the widespread issues affecting the American people that we are deeply struggling with, it would have multiple hearings on how the 40-year inflation high is making it hard for Americans to buy basic needs and small business owners to make ends meet.

According to the BLS data for May 2022, prices for the purchase of pets, pet supplies, and accessories rose 7.1 percent year over year, with pet food costs rising 9.1 percent.

Part of ensuring pet security is ensuring pet food security. Tragically, we have seen in the news that rising inflation costs for pets is forcing some people to surrender their animals to shelters.

In addition to caring for pets, this committee should also have held a hearing, not just sent a letter, regarding the baby formula shortage. An estimated 43 percent of baby formula inventory last month was out of stock nationally. That is up from 18 percent at the start of 2022 and three percent from the same time last year.

In addition to baby formula, this subcommittee should examine the gas prices that are pummeling American families with record prices daily.

This subcommittee should also move to stop the Securities and Exchange Commission from creating red tape that inhibits new market entrants. This red tape will further constrain our supply chain.

So, while the subcommittee today is meeting to discuss an important topic of pet collar safety, the American people want your legislative body to understand that American households across the board are hurting in multiple other areas and are not receiving the attention that they deserve.

Thank you for allowing me to testify today.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Thank you, Ms. Sheffield.

Votes have been called, and so we are going to adjourn until votes have been held, and then we'll come—or, I'm sorry, we'll recess. I better use the right word here. We'll recess—

Mr. CLOUD. I second that motion.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. We're going to recess until after the votes and then come back.

Very good. Thank you.

This committee stands in recess.

[Recess.]

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Thank you, everybody, for bearing with us as we cast our votes. We are going to resume this hearing. And I now recognize myself for five minutes of questioning.

Mr. Simmons, according to Elanco's 8K filing from May 2021, 1,852 pet deaths were, quote, "recorded where the Seresto collar was mentioned alongside the death of a pet," correct?

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. I think you're on mute, Mr. Simmons. We can't hear you.

Mr. SIMMONS. Can you hear me now?

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Yes, we can hear you now. Can you restore the time, please?

Mr. SIMMONS. I'm sorry.

Mr. SIMMONS. Could you repeat the question, Chairman?

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Yes, sir.

According to Elanco's 8K filing from May 2021—I'm quoting it—1,852 pet deaths were, quote, "recorded where the Seresto collar was mentioned alongside the death of a pet," correct?

Mr. SIMMONS. That is correct.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. But you and Elanco maintain that there is, quote, “no scientific evidence of a causal link in Seresto’s active ingredients in pet deaths,” correct?

Mr. SIMMONS. That is correct, Chairman. The data from our pharmacovigilance team, and the review of the data over 10 years, the 33 million dogs that have worn the collar, there’s no linkage to the active ingredients to a pet death.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. And, in fact, in your comment that you submitted to the EPA in September 2021, you determined that only 0.51 percent of deaths were quote, “probably or possibly caused by the collar,” didn’t you?

Mr. SIMMONS. That is correct. And my understanding from that data is the majority of those were linked to entrapment of physical, like, getting caught on a fence as an example.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. Correct.

So let me just show you some analysis that was conducted by Elanco, which we just referred to, as well as the EPA, as well as the Canadian equivalent of the EPA, which is called the PMRA.

Essentially, we look at this chart here, and we see that at the top, Elanco computed that 0.51 percent of pet deaths were possibly or probably caused by the Seresto collar.

The PMRA in Canada, looking at a sample of pet deaths, concluded that 33 percent of those pet deaths were possibly or probably caused by Seresto collars, and the EPA here concluded that 45 percent were possibly or probably caused by the Seresto collar.

Now, sir, I think originally you said that there’s no scientific evidence, no evidence of a causal link. This is clearly evidence. It was so compelling that the Canadian equivalent of the EPA never allowed for Seresto collars to be sold in Canada, correct?

Mr. SIMMONS. Yes, I’m aware of that decision. I would also add that 80 other countries have approved this product. We’ve had over 80 million collars actually used. I’m not familiar with these two, this data comparison and this data.

What I can say is, following the EPA regulatory process around the oversight that we call pharmacovigilance, hosted 200 veterinarians and staff on our team, looking at the data through the way the EPA wants us to, we have not seen a linkage from the active ingredients in the collar to—

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. Well, I understand that, sir. I understand you haven’t seen the linkage, although other authorities have, and their scientists, who are not paid by you, have done so.

Now, Dr. Donley, let me just briefly ask you a question.

How could it be that Elanco’s percentage that it calculated is so low compared to the percentages that the EPA or the PMRA calculated?

Mr. DONLEY. Thank you for your question.

This is what we commonly see, quite frankly, when the regulated industry is doing their own research. It commonly finds that their products are safer than when government agencies or academic scientists take on a similar analysis. This is just—

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHI. Well, I appreciate that. I appreciate that, sir.

Now let me go to Ms. McCormack.

First of all, thank you for your service to the EPA, and I know you're retired after 40 years of service.

We have FOIA documents from the EPA and emails, internal to the EPA, talking about the Seresto collar. Here is just one of them. This is from an employee who basically voiced their opinion about recent coverage of the Seresto controversy.

He said, "Looks like the shit has hit the fan. Will be interesting seeing where this goes. I hope there's a FOIA for all communications on this so that our emails are made public. We have been screaming about Seresto for many years."

I presume that you've heard some of these screams and concerns, correct, Ms. McCormack?

Ms. MCCORMACK. That's correct. A number of EPA employees have contacted me and given me detailed descriptions about what's happening with Seresto, and they were very upset that EPA refused to do anything about it. Instead they—

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Let me talk about one other email before I'm out of time.

There was a May 30, 2019, email that we received in the FOIA which said the following: "It is my strong opinion the agency needs to take action regarding Seresto to protect family pets." This is from May 2019, before *USA Today* or we scrutinized the situation.

I presume you've heard similar concerns and tell us why those concerns were voiced.

Ms. MCCORMACK. Those concerns were voiced because a number of the scientists—and this is not unusual—feel that the decision-makers are not considering the science and they are making decisions based on political reasons.

I did—I don't know if I have time to talk about this—but I did look at the science that the Canadian Government did, the causality analysis. They looked at the consistency and toxicity of effects from exposure of pets to Seresto.

And what they found was very disturbing. It was so disturbing that they decided the risks were too high to approve Seresto, and they could not be mitigated by putting a label statement on the product or by issuing warning labels. So, they refused to approve Seresto.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Thank you, Ms. McCormack.

I'd like to now recognize Mr. Cloud for his five minutes of questions.

Mr. CLOUD. Thank you, Chairman. Hello? Is the audio working?

OK. Thank you, Chairman and thank you, Ms. McCormack, for acknowledging that the EPA sometimes makes political decisions. That's something we'll definitely be coming back to next term.

Ms. Sheffield, the latest Consumer Price Index report revealed that inflation hit 8.6 in May compared to a year prior. This is the highest percentage in the last 40 years. And we've already discussed, of course, families now unfortunately have to make the decision between food and fuel, a lot of them.

Of course, this affects animals and pets as well. You mentioned animals that are being taken to shelters. Some are being abandoned as families have to decide to feed their kids or their pet.

Could you talk about how inflation affects families? And doesn't inflation impact everyone in the same way?

Ms. SHEFFIELD. Yes. Thank you for the question.

Inflation hurts poor and minority households the most. And so that's what is the perverse outcome of what's happened by all of the trillions of dollars in spending that's been pushed through by progressive leaders, including the \$1.9 trillion "stimulus" plan—I use the word in quotes, "stimulus"—last spring, in addition to the \$1.2 trillion in infrastructure spending last fall.

All of these, combined with what happened and was rushed through during the COVID pandemic, has combined to create this inflationary pressure.

And we just had word today that now the Federal Reserve will raise interest rates by 0.75 percent. That's a rate not seen of a hike since 1994.

And what's that going to do? It's going to increase the price of housing, to buy a home, a first-time home buyer. It will shatter the American Dream for so many people. And that is a direct result of the inflation because the Fed is trying to tamp down the inflation by raising interest rates.

And, again, who is hurt the most by this? It is people of color, it is women, it is single mothers. And this is the result of failed liberal policy.

Mr. CLOUD. One of the issues I think that seems to be contributing to the inflation at some level is the supply chain crisis. Most notably, right now baby formula is a shortage.

Could you speak to some of the reasons why we're seeing baby formula shortage?

Ms. SHEFFIELD. Certainly.

Well, as I touched on in my opening remarks, it was a failure by the Biden administration, particularly the FDA, to raise a red flag very rapidly and quickly as to the problems of this baby formula crisis.

And, in particular, as The Wall Street Journal has noted, and other sources, that the baby formula plant in question in Michigan that was sort of the source of the supposed taint, there was no actual evidence that the babies in question who fell ill actually had the same type of strain of the illness, of the disease, which you can test. It was not actually found in the plant itself.

And so, you had this overreaction by the Federal Government to shut down a plant that was crucial to the supply chain without evidence that this indeed was driving the illness in these children.

And then, again, months of dragging this process along, as we've seen here with the Seresto collar, months of this process being dragged out.

This is why the American people have lost trust in government. This is why our institutions are failing us.

Mr. CLOUD. And this is the Economic and Consumer Policy Subcommittee. You mentioned in your testimony that there's a number of things really that the American people are dealing with right now that could fall under the jurisdictional scope of the subcommittee. Could you highlight some of those for us?

Ms. SHEFFIELD. Certainly.

Gas prices are certainly one of those issues that is really hitting home. We produce a monthly inflation tracker that we've put out since we've been following this inflation problem. In May, this May,

2022, compared to last year, gas prices are up 48.7 percent, and the gas bill for your home is 30.2 percent higher.

I mean, again, this hurts people of color, poor families, single mothers the most, and this is a direct result of the policies including tamping down on the oil production, gas production.

And I know that sometimes on the left people say, well, we've got lots of leases and existing ability to develop. But the reality is that these oil and gas and natural gas companies, they make decisions and political—or business calculations. Sadly, they have to factor in the political calculation.

And Biden administration officials have explicitly said that they want to destroy the oil and gas market. And that is what is driving this, the harm and the pain that poor and minority and women households are feeling.

Mr. CLOUD. And I would come back to the previous comment about the EPA making political decisions. Certainly, that's been true when it comes to a number of the energy policies and leases and fuels and such that touch on those types of things.

Thank you very much. Thank you for being here today.

Ms. SHEFFIELD. Thank you.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Thank you, Mr. Cloud.

Now I'd like to recognize Congresswoman Porter for her five minutes of questions.

Ms. PORTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Simmons, does Elanco sell Seresto collars in other countries? You're on mute sir.

Mr. SIMMONS. I'm sorry, I apologize. Yes, we do, Congresswoman. We sell in over 80 countries.

Ms. PORTER. Are the active ingredients for Seresto in the United States different from the active ingredients for Seresto collars in other countries?

Mr. SIMMONS. No. I do not believe they're any different than the other 80 countries.

Ms. PORTER. In other countries, like in Colombia and Australia, the warning labels for Seresto collars classify the collar as highly toxic and as poison.

Does the label for Seresto in the United States include that language?

Mr. SIMMONS. Labels differ in animal health products around the world for different reasons. And, no, we do not have that. We have 80 complete studies that were submitted to the EPA that cover all aspects of—

Ms. PORTER. Reclaiming my time, sir. I'm just trying to ask a factual question.

Does the label in the United States have language like "highly toxic" or "poison," yes or no?

Mr. SIMMONS. It does not.

Ms. PORTER. OK. So, the warning label here in the United States, though, does say that mild reactions may occur. It mentions hair loss, scratching, and redness. The most severe symptoms listed are eczema and lesions.

Does this label mention—this is the warning label—does it mention the potential for death?

Mr. SIMMONS. It does not. And, again, the label is—

Ms. PORTER. It does not. So, a pet owner, looking at this label that we're looking at, would have absolutely no reason, no way to know that Seresto may have caused roughly 100 pet deaths. That's what both the Canadian pest management agency, the PMRA, and the EPA found.

Will you change this label so that it includes death as a possible side effect?

Mr. SIMMONS. Congresswoman, we do not believe the scientific data warrants a label change. And, again, that is not just the 80 studies that were submitted. There's been 20 additional added studies since and all of the oversight data that's been done on the 33 million pets over the 10 years.

So, again, following an EPA-regulated process, we're always open. If a data warranted some need for a change, we would do that. But this is a public health business, just like human health, and data science and facts is absolutely critical to warrant any kind of a change to a label.

Ms. PORTER. Reclaiming my time, Mr. Simmons. Let's talk about—we can turn the screen-sharing off—let's talk about the EPA.

The EPA encouraged both your predecessor, Bayer, and your company, Elanco, to update the warning label. Yet you just said that you never have.

So, the Federal Government did, in fact, advise you to update the label and you failed to do so. Is that correct?

Mr. SIMMONS. I do not believe that is correct. We are in a regular engagement with the EPA. We've not received any formal—there's no data that warrants that, and there's been no formal engagement on that to our—

Ms. PORTER. Reclaiming my time. Mr. Simmons. I don't want to argue the data because I'm not the data scientist here. I just want to—I trust the people at the EPA. So, let's go back to the EPA for a minute.

The EPA asked Bayer, the predecessor here, in 2019 to help the Agency collect data on adverse incidents for cats and dogs, using the Seresto collar. EPA asked Bayer to split the registration for cats and dogs so the Agency could better understand and evaluate the risks for each type of pet.

Bayer refused, saying that that change might have, quote, "an adverse impact on sales," and they also said, quote, "It would be a substantial increase in work."

Mr. Simmons, are you willing to make that change and split the registration for cats and dogs as the EPA requested, or do you believe it's too much work?

Mr. SIMMONS. I am willing to engage with the EPA on anything that the scientific data and an engagement under the regulatory body of the EPA merits is the right thing to do.

We believe the 80 studies and all of the pharmacovigilance data that we've submitted to them stands, that this is a safe product, as well as all the value that this brings to the pets and to the human health with a tick-borne illness on over 500,000 people a year that the CDC highlights.

So, the value is significant. The risk is reasonable. Always we're willing to engage with the EPA.

Ms. PORTER. But with all respect, Mr. Simmons, it's not your job to decide if the risk is reasonable. That's the job of the regulatory body.

My concern here is that Seresto is standing in the way of allowing the EPA to gather those necessary data and make that decision.

I encourage Elanco to work with the EPA to get this data, and if they won't, then Seresto will have to come off the market because too many families have suffered already.

I yield back.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Thank you, Congresswoman.

I'd like to now recognize Mr. Clyde for his five minutes of questions.

Mr. CLYDE. Thank you, Chairman Krishnamoorthi and Ranking Member Cloud.

I feel obligated to begin by stating the obvious this afternoon: Today's hearing is a colossal waste of time and resources.

Out of all the economic concerns keeping the American people up at night—namely, 40-year high inflation, inflation, and more inflation—I'm afraid flea and tick collars just don't quite make the cut.

Yet here we are at the very first Economic and Consumer Policy Subcommittee hearing of 2022, to examine Seresto flea and tick collars. I mean, seriously?

What comfort or assistance does this hearing render to families of Georgia's Ninth District struggling to make ends meet?

What information does this hearing provide to small businesses in my district that are battling rising costs, supply chain disruptions, and labor shortages?

What assistance does this hearing offer to northeast Georgians living paycheck to paycheck just to put people food on the table or dog food in the dog bowl?

Have you seen the price of dog food lately? Rising inflation is driving it higher and higher.

My Doberman Pinscher is on the Hill today, and I was going to have her join us if the topic was about the price of dog food, because, you know, she works for food. But it's not. It's about flea and tick collars.

So, I thought I would share a few pictures of her instead. So, if you would roll the first picture.

The first one, this picture was taken a few years ago—here we go—when the price of dog food was reasonable.

And if you'd roll the second picture.

This picture was taken a few months ago when the price of dog food began to greatly increase.

And then the third picture was taken today—if you'll change that, thank you—the third picture was taken today after we realized that the focus of this hearing was not going to be about inflationary pressures on dog food, but it was going to be on flea and tick collars.

As you can see, she is not happy with the ever-increasing price of dog food, dog bones, and dog treats.

Thank you.

But Democrats have managed to bury their heads in the sand for over a year as President Biden's disastrous agenda, failed economic policies destroy the lives of middle-class Americans.

The American people just don't have the luxury of living in the left's utopian fantasy because consumers are burdened with the inescapable reality of skyrocketing inflation and record high gas prices every solitary day.

After more than a year of excuses, lies, and deception, Americans recognize the truth: That President Biden—with the help of congressional Democrats—ignited inflation by injecting trillions of dollars into the economy.

Despite month after month of sticker shock and price pains, Democrats have continued to carelessly balloon our national debt, which is now over \$31 trillion, and have naively ignored the Jimmy Carter era levels of inflation.

Instead of holding ridiculous, nonsensical hearings that provide absolutely no help to American workers and families struggling to put food on the table, fill their gas tanks, and purchase common goods, this subcommittee must do its job and hold legitimate hearings on the real economic issues at hand so we can discuss effective solutions to get our country back on track.

Now, I'm not going to be holding my breath, because my Democrat colleagues conveniently take cover every time President Biden's self-inflicted crises damage our country.

Yes, today's hearing is a massive waste of time, but it is also evidence of a desperate distraction to fill the empty void of leadership, allowing Democrats to avoid their legitimate responsibility of conducting proper oversight over the Biden administration.

Make no mistake, the American people deserve better, they deserve real issue hearings, and they deserve it now.

I have a question, Ms. Sheffield. Thank you for being here in person today.

In your testimony, I believe that you mentioned pet food prices are increasing at a rate greater than the reported 40-year high rate of inflation. I think you mentioned over nine percent, where the inflation rate is just over eight percent.

So, what does your experience and research show is happening to American families due to the increasing prices of pet food?

Ms. SHEFFIELD. Well, certainly we are seeing reports that animals, some animals, sadly, are being abandoned, and some animals are being taken to shelters because families have to choose between feeding their children and feeding their dogs or their cats or other pets.

And I think that in this developed country, a First World country, this should never be an issue. We should never have gotten to this point.

And this hearing, I find very puzzling why there is no one from the actual agency in question, the EPA, present.

Mr. CLYDE. Thank you. Thank you for that. And I agree with your assessment.

With that, I yield back.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Thank you, Mr. Clyde. Thanks for sharing the pictures of your dog too. I notice she was not wearing a Seresto collar.

Let me call on Mr. Johnson.

You are now on for five minutes, Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Johnson?

OK. Let's go to Mr.—oh, Shontel Brown.

Congresswoman Brown, you are recognized for five minutes.

Ms. BROWN. Thank you, Chairman Krishnamoorthi, for holding this hearing.

As a former dog owner, I take the safety of pet products very seriously. It is deeply troubling to find that Seresto flea and tick collars are killing our pets instead of keeping them healthy.

Mr. Simmons, Elanco and Bayer signed an agreement for Elanco to purchase Bayer's Animal Health Division in August 2019. Yes, or no?

Mr. SIMMONS. That is correct.

Ms. BROWN. Did the purchase relieve Elanco from any reporting duties owed to EPA concerning products it had acquired in connection with the purchase of Bayer Animal Health? Yes, or no?

Mr. SIMMONS. I do not believe that it did at all, no.

Ms. BROWN. Well, nevertheless, between April 2020 and March 2021, Elanco did not provide EPA any incident reports concerning Seresto. Yes, or no?

Mr. SIMMONS. I would like to explain. We did continue to report them physically. We sent them in the mail. They changed during the pandemic to electronically. So, they continued to be sent but not received. As soon as senior management found this out, it was changed within days.

Complete reports were sent to them. There was no change in the data, in all the data that's been submitted.

But I will take accountability. That's unacceptable for our organization. And the quality changes have made since then.

But that happened during the pandemic, that is correct.

Ms. BROWN. OK. So, Mr. Simmons, it is your testimony here today that between April 2020 and March 12, 2021, nearly one full year, Elanco received zero adverse incident reports concerning the Seresto collars from consumers?

Mr. SIMMONS. The reports were sent in. They were completed and received by the EPA, but not on a monthly or quarterly timely basis because of the mix-up in the pandemic. There was not any slowing down of sending them. It was just a process change.

But all of that data, every incident report that's ever happened for the 10 years, has been submitted to the EPA and received under normal process.

But during that change from hard copy to digital, yes, there was a period where they were sent back to us.

Ms. BROWN. OK. So, in fact, it cannot be your testimony, because as *USA Today* reported, and other sources have now publicly reported, Elanco failed to turn over as many as 11,000 adverse incident reports concerning the Seresto collar between mid-2020 and early 2021.

Mr. SIMMONS. The EPA received all of those reports, not in the timely fashion as requested because of the change from physical copy to digital copy. The intent was that they were to be sent, and it was a process change and was not fully executed against.

Ms. BROWN. I have no further questions.

Mr. SIMMONS. But all reports, all data have been—

Ms. BROWN. I'm reclaiming my time. I have no further questions, and I yield back.

Thank you.

Mr. SIMMONS. Thank you.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Let me take some of that time that you're yielding back, Congresswoman Brown.

Now, let me go to Dr. Donley for a second.

Can you put up the chart? Actually, show me the chart with regard to the—yes, thank you, that one.

So, Dr. Donley, I'm holding up the chart with regard to the estimates of reported pet deaths probably or possibly caused by the Seresto collar. This 0.51 number, that represents 12 deaths out of 2,340 pet deaths that Seresto says was probably or possibly caused by the Seresto collar, but not because of the active ingredients, but because of entrapment and other types of injuries, whereas the PMRA and EPA say something very, very different.

Are you familiar with the way that Elanco has hired consultants, independent review bodies, such as SCI and KNW consultancies, to come up with these numbers?

Mr. DONLEY. Yes, I'm familiar with it.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. And tell me your thoughts about those consulting firms and what they do for Elanco and how you could come up with a number that low compared to what other agencies have come up with.

Mr. DONLEY. So, it's very common for pesticide companies to hire consultants and to pay those companies money to do analysis for them. This is very common.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. So, if they're paid money, are they going to be more biased than scientists at the PMRA and EPA?

Mr. DONLEY. There's a rich amount of literature showing that if you have a financial conflict of interest, if you are profiting off of something, you're going to find that that product is generally much safer than an independent scientist would, for instance.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. I understand. Thank you.

I'm going to now recognize Mr. Johnson.

Congressman Johnson, you are now on the clock.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thanks for conducting this investigation into how man's best friend has been treated by Republicans.

Under Republican leadership, Congress has defunded persistently the EPA and has installed, under Donald Trump, administrators who undermine its purpose. And so, what we have as a result is pets needlessly suffering grim fates and their owners being left saddened by what they're trying to do in order to make their pets' lives just a little better.

And these Seresto collars caused more harm than fleas and ticks ever could. Eighty-six thousand consumers filed complaints with the EPA. But when it came to protecting man's best friend, we couldn't depend on the EPA. And it refuses—or it refused to act on the concerns of the public.

Mr. Donley, the EPA knew about these reports for five years, and the first reports were from 2015, when 50 to 100 consumers began

reporting the deaths of their pets linked to the Seresto flea and tick collar.

And when you have 50 to 100 reported incidents, how many more can we estimate actually occurred? How many more pet deaths and injuries occurred? Do you have any way of telling, of knowing, estimating?

Mr. DONLEY. Well, it's probably going to differ between pesticides. But what we do know is that pesticide incident reporting is much far lower than the actual incidents themselves.

For some pesticides, the reporting rate is as low as four percent. So only 1 in 25 harms from that pesticide will actually get reported to the proper authorities.

So, you're looking at numbers that are actually drastically underestimating the true scope of harm here.

Mr. JOHNSON. And the only reason that the public knew about the harm caused by this pesticide is because the Center for Biological Diversity publicly petitioned the EPA to cancel registrations for Seresto flea collars.

If they had not brought this to light, do you think we would even know of the dangers presented by these collars?

Mr. DONLEY. No, we wouldn't. The investigation that came out in *USA Today* in 2021 really brought this to the public attention. And if there wasn't that amount of pressure from the public, this would just still be completely unknown.

EPA, for the last 10 years, has not done anything to alert consumers to the harms associated with this product or any other pesticide products where there are a very high number of incidents.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you.

Ms. McCormack, in 2016 Canadian officials contacted the EPA about Seresto and ultimately decided to not allow the Seresto collar to be sold to the Canadian public. It would seem that this decision was made due to evidence that the collars would be dangerous to pets in Canada.

Why did the EPA fail to take proper action based on what it knew about these collars six years ago?

You should unmute.

Ms. MCCORMACK. Yes, I'm doing that. I think some of the people at EPA are programmed to go along with whatever industry says. It makes life easier for you, you can go home earlier, and you can also get promoted easier if you go along with what industry says.

It's unfortunately a problem there, and I've seen it over the years, and it's very hard to do something about it.

But I think Canada's analysis was very scientific. It was not only based on incident data and sales data. It was based on the toxicity of the two pesticides in Seresto. And they looked at the consistency and what happened eventually with the pets that were exposed to Seresto.

But unfortunately, EPA decided they would keep monitoring the situation, and they didn't give a deadline as to when they would stop monitoring and do something about the pesticide.

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, thank you.

I'm out of time. But, Mr. Chairman, this is not an example of American exceptionalism. And with that, I yield back.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Thank you, Congressman Johnson.

I will take a couple minutes here for closing remarks, and then we'll adjourn.

I just want to thank all the witnesses for coming, and thank you to Ms. Sheffield for appearing in person, and thank you to all of our witnesses for appearing by Zoom.

This is a very serious topic. American families consider pets as one of their family, and when, as Mr. Simmons has said in the past and in various statements, when a pet is healthy, their owners are healthier too.

And the flip side is unfortunately true as well, which is when a pet is unhealthy, their owners and the family are left distraught.

And so, in this particular instance, there are a hundred thousand incident reports of pets who suffered in a lot of cases very grievous harm and thousands of pet deaths.

Two regulatory bodies, the EPA and the PMRA, dug deep into why there were these pet deaths and came up with rather startling conclusions.

On the one hand, Canada acted. They decided not to have Seresto being sold in the marketplace. If I might cite what Ms. Sheffield said, they acted promptly.

The EPA did not. The EPA dragged its heels for years and years and years, and here we are.

And so, I am very disappointed with Seresto—I'm sorry, Elanco—for not having truly independent bodies review the science and provide it with detailed analysis, instead preferring to have SCI and KNW and other outfits whom they pay handsomely to provide rather alarming analyses such as what we've had.

Point-fifty-one (0.51) percent of these incidents being possibly or probably caused by Seresto does not pass the smell test. It just does not pass the smell test. Out of more than 30 million collars sold in the United States, for Elanco to say that 12 pets may have possibly or probably died because of the collar but not because of any of its active ingredients does not seem plausible in the least.

And so here we are, and we have to make some decisions. And so because of the tremendous number of pet incidents, the tremendous number of deaths, even when factoring in sales, I sadly have no choice but to recommend that the EPA commence a Notice of Intent to Cancel proceedings and to fully investigate what's going on with the Seresto collar.

And I respectfully request Elanco to voluntarily recall these collars at this time, pending this further investigation.

Finally, a word for EPA. What they have done is completely unacceptable. They have been asleep at the switch with regard to Seresto collars. Millions of pet owners out there are waiting for the EPA to act, and we are calling upon the EPA to act now.

With that, in closing, I just want to say—I'd like to recognize Mr. Cloud.

Do you have any closing remarks?

Mr. CLOUD. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, again, Ms. Sheffield, for showing up in person and to the other witnesses who joined us online and to the committee members who participated.

I appreciate this committee and the mandate upon this committee and the work that we have, and certainly the potential we

have to work on some important things. And I would just continue to point to the fact that people—people—humans are suffering throughout this Nation each and every day, making tough decisions about food, about fuel, about their families.

And this being the Economic Policy Committee, I would recommend that we be looking at things like our energy policy that has helped create this issue, supply chain breakdown, food supply shortage, including the baby formula shortage.

We should be talking about inflation and interest rates. We also could be talking about the businesses who can't operate their business because of the smash-and-grab rioting that's happening in cities and the policies from leftist DAs who make it hard for businesses to work and to thrive, and the families that are affected by that and the communities that are certainly affected by that.

So, there's certainly a lot of things that are on the mind of the American people when it comes to the economic policies that are causing real troubling times for us right now.

We were headed back to economic recovery. Right now, no one can find people who will work. Every industry I talk to right now is having trouble finding people.

That's the same answer I would get when I would ask the industries three years ago, but it was for very different reasons. Three years ago, we had every demographic throughout America wages were going up and people were thriving, and we had as close as we've ever been to full employment.

Now we see a very different picture and the American people are hurting. And so, we need to get back to that and making sure that American families are able to thrive here in the United States.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY. Thank you so much, Mr. Cloud.

Without objection, all members will have five legislative days within which to submit additional written questions to the chair for Mr. Simmons, Dr. Donley, Ms. McCormack, and Ms. Sheffield.

These questions will be forwarded to the respective individual for his or her response. I ask our witnesses to please respond as promptly as you are able.

Now this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:59 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

