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2016-2017

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**STATEMENT OF THE
AMERICAN MOSQUITO CONTROL ASSOCIATION**

**HOUSE OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE
HEARING ON
ZIKA VIRUS: COORDINATION OF A MULTI-AGENCY RESPONSE
February 24, 2016**

Chairman Chaffetz and Ranking Member Cummings, thank you for considering the views of the American Mosquito Control Association (AMCA) concerning Zika virus and its threat to public health.

The AMCA is a scientific/educational association of vector control professionals and over 1600 organized mosquito control programs nationwide that provide mosquito control services to protect public health.

Zika virus causes illness in both men and women, and has been associated with horrific birth defects in newborns. Preventing an outbreak of Zika virus disease in the U.S. this summer is a must win. We recommend Congress and the President consider three immediate actions that will help protect public health dramatically.

First, we encourage Congress to authorize supplemental funding for 2016 and increased funding in FY 2017 to support vector-borne disease surveillance. Funding should be allocated through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Division of Vector-Borne Diseases. The Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) grant program provides local health jurisdictions with personnel, equipment and resources to detect and respond to mosquito transmitted diseases, but the program in its current state is insufficient to prevent the spread of the Zika virus.

Second, we request that Congress fully fund the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) provisions for proven public health pesticides. In 1996 Congress unanimously approved FQPA (PL 104-170) to modernize the regulation of pesticides and expand data requirements to demonstrate their safety to people and the environment. A key element was authorization to use federal funds when the cost of new data for public health pesticides – those for mosquitoes and similar disease vectors – was more than their producers could afford, putting registration at risk. Unfortunately, these essential funds have never been appropriated, and we are now losing critical public health tools because the cost to prove their safety is higher than

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their sales can cover.

Finally, use the Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health (MASH) Act to support local government mosquito control activities. *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*, the two mosquito species that spread Zika, dengue, Chikungunya, and yellow fever, are notoriously hard to prevent or kill. They live in our houses, their eggs can withstand months of drying, and their young can develop in water containers as small as a bottle cap. Draining standing water helps, but requires massive manpower for area-wide control, and isn't a long-term solution. No predator eats enough mosquitoes to provide effective biological control. Repellents do protect individuals, but also redirect the adult mosquitoes to bite somebody else.

Therefore, we urge Congress to fully fund the MASH Act (PL 108-75) which passed with bipartisan support during the West Nile virus outbreak. This bill authorized federal funds for local governments to protect our communities from mosquitoes and other disease vectors. But by the time the MASH Act was signed into law the West Nile crisis had largely passed and no funds were ever appropriated. Today we face another imminent outbreak of a disease for which mosquito control is the only viable short-term solution. Fortunately Congress has the means readily at hand to help prevent or minimize the risk if it chooses to devote dollars to the existing authority.

Vector-borne diseases, whether ancient like malaria or relatively new like Zika, are an unfortunate reality, and Zika won't be the last. There are many factors that contribute to the emergence of novel vector-borne diseases, including poverty, climate change, and global trade. They will require long-term solutions. We should develop vaccines and treatments, but these are also years away. What will work today is to protect our homeland and our neighbors through effective vector control.

These low-cost, non-partisan actions taken now will help ensure the safety and health of the American people.

Thank you for considering AMCA's views and recommendations on this important public health issue.