



U.S. WILDLIFE AND HEALTH ALLIANCE

May 11, 2022

Honorable Members of the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the United States Congress:

United States leadership is crucial to ending the current COVID-19 pandemic and preventing future pandemics from occurring. Tragically, we will soon approach the horrific milestone of one million American lives lost to COVID-19.

We do not know where or when the next pandemic will start. We do know it is likely to emerge within a decade and to be the result of zoonotic spillover of a virus from wildlife to humans, like all other pandemics over the last century.

We have a good chance of stopping the next pandemic before it starts. To do so we must learn quickly from the latest science and translate this into policy to ensure various US Government agencies work together, and with other nations, to support key actions around the world.

As organizations with deep expertise on wildlife-human health linkages we also know that much can, fortunately, be done to prevent disease spillover before it occurs. This requires addressing problems with wildlife trade and markets, preventing deforestation and forest degradation, and improving livestock biosecurity and management practices.

It is of the utmost importance that actions to prevent spillover at the source be given far greater attention in US policy. Such actions must be part of any comprehensive plan to prevent and prepare for future pandemics. We cannot stress enough how much more cost effective and efficient it is to prevent spillover in the first place, than to try to control an outbreak, epidemic, or pandemic.

Even a one percent reduction in future pandemic risk is more than justified by the global annual spending of about \$20 billion needed to address the root causes of spillover. Governments, including the US, have so far failed to work together to prioritize this spending.

Failing to address the drivers of emerging infectious diseases and pandemics would be a grave mistake and ignores emerging scientific consensus, including a [significant report](#)



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from a global science taskforce convened by Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health (attached here). A "containment-only" strategy also will be seen as acceptance of sickness and death among front line communities, and the poorest members of society, who will always suffer more with this approach.

Our coalitions, the [Coalition to Prevent Pandemics at the Source](#), and the [U.S. Wildlife and Health Alliance](#) bring together a diverse group of organizations and many of the leading public health, wildlife and conservation practitioners and experts. Our coalitions have developed a [suite of recommendations](#) and statement of [principles](#), respectively, that we have shared with the Administration and that we urge you to review and address. The Coalition to Prevent Pandemics at the Source has also developed an [action agenda](#) describing the interventions needed around the world. We stand ready to assist in any way that we can and to provide more detailed recommendations to your Committee and its members.

An ounce of prevention is truly worth a pound of cure.

Respectfully yours,

Preventing Pandemics at the Source Secretariat

Dalberg Catalyst

The US Wildlife and Health Alliance