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 Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

2 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

3 This Act may be cited as the “Desert Locust Control Act”.
SEC. 2. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

It is the policy of the United States to prioritize efforts to control the ongoing desert locust outbreak in East Africa and other affected regions, mitigate the impacts on food security, economic productivity, and political stability, improve interagency coordination to prevent future outbreaks, and promote resilience in affected countries.

SEC. 3. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The United States Agency for International Development reports that countries in East Africa are currently suffering the worst desert locust outbreak in decades, which will devour crops and pasture and destroy local livelihoods across the region.

(2) As of December 2020, the Food and Agriculture Organization reported that there were 42 million people experiencing acute food insecurity in East Africa, which numbers are projected to increase if the desert locust outbreak is not controlled.

(3) The desert locust outbreak in East Africa, particularly in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia, is negatively impacting food security, local livelihoods and economic productivity, and may threaten political stability in the region.

(4) Proactive investments now to control the desert locust outbreak could reduce the need for a
much larger United States humanitarian response
effort later, as well as support economic and political
stability and build resilience in affected countries.

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

SEC. 4. INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP.

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

(b) Membership.—

(1) In general.—The interagency working
group shall be composed of the following:

(A) Two representatives from the United
States Agency for International Development.
(B) One representative from each of the following:

(i) The United States Mission to the United Nations Agencies for Food and Agriculture.


(iii) The Department of State.

(iv) The Department of Defense.

(v) The Department of Agriculture.

(vi) Any other relevant Federal department or agency.

(2) CHAIR.—The President shall designate one of the representatives from the United States Agency for International Development described in paragraph (1)(A) to serve as chair of the interagency working group.

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

(1) assess the scope of the desert locust outbreak in East Africa and other affected regions, including its impact on food security, economic productivity, and political stability in affected countries;

(2) assess the impacts of restrictions relating to the coronavirus disease 2019 (commonly referred to as “COVID–19”) pandemic;
(3) monitor the effectiveness of ongoing assistance efforts to control the desert locust outbreak and mitigate its impacts and identify gaps and opportunities for additional support to such programs;

(4) review the effectiveness of regional and multilateral efforts to control the desert locust outbreak and the coordination among relevant United States Government agencies, regional governments, and international organizations, including the World Food Programme and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization; and

(5) not later than 90 days after the establishment of the interagency working group under subsection (a), develop and submit to the President and the appropriate congressional committees a comprehensive, strategic plan to control the desert locust outbreak, including a description of efforts to—

(A) improve coordination among relevant United States Government agencies, regional governments, and international organizations, including the World Food Programme and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization;

(B) ensure delivery of necessary assets control the desert locust outbreak and humani-
tarian and development assistance to address
and mitigate impacts to food security, economic
productivity, and political stability; and

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

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

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

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

(1) the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the
Committee on Appropriations of the House of Rep-
resentatives; and
(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations and
the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.