

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 22, 2025

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C.

Dear Secretary Rollins:

We write to express the urgent need for a modernized sterile fly production facility in Douglas, Arizona, to combat the reemergence of the New World Screwworm.

Historically, Douglas played a critical role in the successful eradication efforts from 1962 to 1966. The original USDA fly rearing facility, located at the Douglas Municipal Airport (3450 E. Airport Road, Douglas, AZ 85607), operated from 1963 to 1983 and was instrumental in maintaining a sterile fly barrier zone along the U.S.-Mexico border. At its peak, the facility produced and sterilized millions of screwworm flies each week, delivering a direct, measurable benefit to cattle producers across the Western United States.

While the facility ceased operations following the eradication of screwworm in Mexico, recent developments demonstrate that the threat has reemerged. The remnants of the Douglas site are no longer functional, yet the strategic need for a sterile fly facility in Southern Arizona, particularly Douglas, remains as critical today as it was six decades ago.

We recognize and appreciate USDA's prioritization of the Mission, Texas, facility and fully support ensuring its successful operation. However, Mission is more than 1,000 miles from the Arizona border and approximately 580 miles (air distance) from New Mexico. Once the Mission facility is fully operational, we strongly urge USDA to prioritize reestablishing sterile fly production in Douglas. Furthermore, we would like the USDA to consider utilizing funding appropriated in the Working Families Tax Cut Act to revitalize this facility.

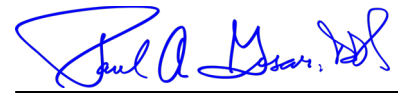
While we applaud your New World Screwworm Domestic Readiness and Response Policy Initiative, and appreciate Arizona's inclusion in this plan, we believe it is paramount to operational success to diversify the avenues of approach by having multiple localities engaged on this critical mission. Reviving a facility in Douglas would restore a key biosecurity safeguard while creating opportunities for regional collaboration with Mexico and the broader Southwest. Its location offers ideal proximity to current outbreak risks and established port infrastructure, supporting binational coordination on animal health and disease prevention. Rehabilitating this site would significantly strengthen surveillance and rapid-response capacity along the U.S.-Mexico border, while ensuring containment and prevention efforts remain geographically strategic for the Western livestock industry.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to safeguarding American agriculture. We look forward to working with you and your team to advance this important biosecurity initiative.

Sincerely,



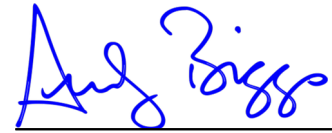
Juan Ciscomani
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



David Schweikert
Member of Congress



Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



Elijah Crane
Member of Congress