



RE: INVITATION TO SIGN ON COALITION LETTER – FED VET PAY

TO:

State VMAs
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Academy of Veterinary and Comparative Toxicology
American Association for Laboratory Animal Science
American Association of Corporate and Public Practice Veterinarians
American Association of Extension Veterinarians
American Association of Food Hygiene Veterinarians
American Association of Public Health Veterinarians
American Association of Veterinary Immunologists
American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians
American Board of Veterinary Toxicology
American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine
American College of Veterinary Microbiologists
American College of Veterinary Pathologists
American College of Veterinary Preventive Medicine
American College of Zoological Medicine
American Society for Veterinary Clinical Pathology
American Veterinary Epidemiology Society
Association for Veterinary Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine
National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials
National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians
National Commission on Veterinary Economic Issues
Registry of Veterinary Pathology – Armed Forces Institute of Pathology

FROM: Gina Luke, Assistant Director Government Relations Division, AVMA

Your association/society is invited to join the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the National Association of Federal Veterinarians (NAFV) in a letter to Congress seeking to address the barriers faced by federal agencies in attracting the next generation of federal veterinarians. The letter urges Congress to increase and enhance federal recruitment and retention incentives available to such agencies that employ veterinarians.

If your association/society would like to be listed on this letter you will need to send an email to Gina Luke at gluke@avma.org no later than Friday, September 26. Your email should include your association's name (no acronyms please), identify a primary point of contact at the association along with her/his phone and email address. We hope you will join us in this important endeavor to improve compensation for federally employed veterinarians. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Act Now to Protect the Nation's Animal and Public Health

The undersigned organizations urge Congress to act now to help bolster recruitment and retention incentives for veterinarians in service to the federal government. More than 2,900 veterinarians presently serve on the front lines of the nation's food safety, public health, animal health and homeland security efforts. Veterinarians hold essential positions at a number of agencies, including the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Interior, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Federal veterinarians perform a variety of essential functions and hold a wide range of important jobs in federal agencies ranging from epidemiologists, pathologists, food safety inspectors and public health officials. They help ensure that we have safe and effective drugs for our animals, fight diseases in the field that affect both humans and animals, as well as perform cutting-edge research that helps lead to ground-breaking discoveries benefiting both human and animal health.

Congress must take proactive steps now to avert a catastrophe and ameliorate problems created by an inadequate federal compensation and incentive package. There is a projected shortage in public health veterinarians of up to 4 percent per year for the next 10 years. This shortage, when combined with the facts that more than a 100 veterinarians are needed to fill current positions and hundreds of veterinarians are on the cusp of retirement, makes it abundantly clear that federal agencies need to enhance recruitment and retention incentives if they are to fill present and future vacancies.

Competition for new graduates has become increasingly intense with the private sector winning out. Veterinarians have a multitude of choices on where and what kind of veterinary medicine to practice. Student loan debt exceeding \$100,000 often makes private practice the only feasible option for the nation's 2,700 new graduates each year. If federal agencies are to attract new veterinarians they will have to become more financially attractive.

Congress can correct inequities in the compensation packages for federal veterinarians. As a group, their compensation lags behind other similarly trained federal health professionals. **The answer lies in modifying the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations to give veterinarians similar pay categories available to their physician and dentist colleagues.**

Sincerely,
American Veterinary Medical Association
National Association of Federal Veterinarians