

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 14, 2025

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Noem:

As members of the Texas congressional delegation, we respectfully urge the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to reinstate the Cross-Border Threat Screening and Supply Chain Defense (CBTS) Center of Excellence at Texas A&M University. CBTS is in strategic proximity to an expansive portion of the southwest border and provides unique capabilities for innovation, training, and test and evaluation of border security technologies and methods. More importantly, the CBTS mission space encompasses naturally occurring and man-made biological threats—including the widespread outbreak of the re-emergent New World screwworm (NWS), flesh-eating larvae that are spreading northward through Mexico.

Last month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released that there was a detected case in Nuevo Leon, 70 miles from the border.¹ Further troubling was the USDA Secretary's alert of another screwworm detection earlier this week, 170 miles from the southern border.² A domestic outbreak of this parasite has the potential to cost billions of dollars to reestablish containment and will plague livestock, wildlife, and humans with expanding infestations of flesh-eating larvae if not caught and treated early.

CBTS has a proven record of advancing detection technologies, training frontline DHS staff, and building cross-border partnerships. If status is restored for CBTS, DHS can act immediately through CBTS's rapid contracting mechanisms that allow for piloting projects and accelerating innovative solutions.

If reinstated, CBTS can:

- Deliver NWS-focused training for Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Border Patrol canine and equine units, as well as hybrid e-learning and field courses for frontline personnel.
- Conduct interagency simulation exercises to strengthen detection, containment, and response under realistic outbreak scenarios.

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2025, September). *Mexico Confirms Case of New World Screwworm in Nuevo Leon*

² Rollins, B. [@SecRollins] (2025, October 6). *NWS Threat Update*
<https://x.com/SecRollins/status/1975302374718619820>

- Advance diagnostics and AI-supported analytics and coordination to identify invasive pest pathways and risk areas before they disrupt U.S. supply chains, or gain entry into the U.S.
- Efficiently and effectively network its efforts with the ongoing NWS responses led by Texas A&M AgriLife and across Texas.

CBTS is ready to equip DHS with research, training, and rapid-response capabilities essential to counter all-hazards border threats, including New World screwworm. We strongly urge DHS to promptly reinstate CBTS as an active Center of Excellence to ensure the nation remains prepared and resilient.

Sincerely,



Tony Gonzales
Member of Congress



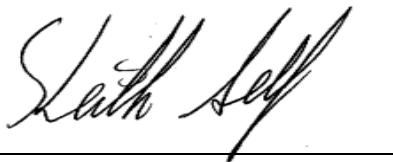
Monica De La Cruz
Member of Congress



Pete Sessions
Member of Congress



Michael McCaul
Member of Congress



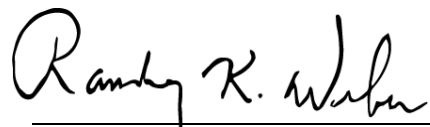
Keith Self
Member of Congress



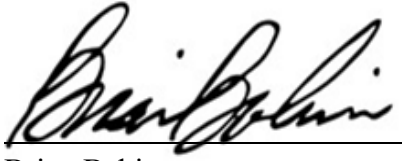
Jake Ellzey
Member of Congress



Nathaniel Moran
Member of Congress



Randy Weber
Member of Congress




Brian Babin
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Morgan Luttrell
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August Pfluger
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