FUNDING THE SMASH ACT AND A NATIONWIDE DATABASE FOR VECTOR SURVEILLANCE

ISSUE: The emergence and spread of West Nile virus and Zika virus highlighted our nation's insufficient preparation for responding to mosquito-borne diseases. Ongoing responses to these and future diseases requires renewed funding to support research, modernization, and evaluation of the tools we use. The nation's vector management programs must be upgraded to mitigate the impacts of current and future exotic vector-borne diseases.

Background: The Strengthening Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health (SMASH) Act, included as section 607 of the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation Act of 2019 (P.L. 116-22) reauthorized Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) resources to be used to address emerging infectious mosquito-borne disease and improve existing control programs for the protection of public health in our nation. The measure expands and extends authorization for $100 million in annual grants for mosquito prevention, control, and response programs. Funding for projects and programs authorized under the SMASH Act is the American Mosquito Control Association's highest priority.

Discussion: It is necessary to improve mosquito surveillance and control activities by local agencies as authorized by the SMASH Act and appropriated through existing line items such as CDC's divisions of Vector-Borne Diseases and Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) grants. **An additional $10 Million in FY'24** funding for ELC grants is requested to enhance capacity for mosquito abatement programs and to expand nation-wide surveillance of vector-borne disease through development of a national database (VectorSurv). A national database will support state, local, tribal and territorial agencies allowing for coordinated surveillance and abatement activities as authorized through the SMASH Act.

VectorSurv is a web-based platform for data management and analysis that is currently used by vector control and public health agencies in the U.S. The system was initiated in 2006 as a partnership of the Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California, the California Department of Public Health, and the Davis Arbovirus Research and Training (DART) Lab at the University of California, Davis. VectorSurv has since expanded to include other states, and the system now serves a growing number of U.S. states and US-Affiliated Pacific Islands (AZ, CDC, CA, HI, NE, NC, ND, NJ, SD, TN, UT, WA, US-Affiliated Pacific Islands).

AMCA is also requesting an **allocation of $5,000,0000** from within the President's request for the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Environmental Stewardship program to identify weaknesses in pesticide spray drift models that were developed for agricultural and forestry applications and are used to determine the fate of mosquito control applications. Using these models negatively impacts the availability of mosquito control pesticides. There is a critical need to address these weaknesses through research focused on optimizing aerial spray technologies for on-target deposition and drift mitigation, and to work cooperatively with AMCA and the Environmental Protection Agency to update their pesticide review methodology.

NEEDED ACTIONS:

Support public health efforts by funding the Strengthening Mosquito Abatement for Safety and Health (SMASH) Act, including $10 Million increase in funding available for the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Divisions of Vector-Borne Diseases and Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity to support mosquito surveillance and control activities; and $5 Million allocated from within USDA funding for spray drift modeling.