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The Honorable Brooke Rollins
President & CEO
America First Policy Institute
1777 N Kent Street Suite 1400
Arlington, VA 22209

Dear Ms. Rollins:

As the full Senate prepares to consider your nomination for Secretary of Agriculture, I write to inquire about your plan to address the ongoing H5N1 avian influenza (“bird flu”) outbreak, which is contributing to high egg prices for consumers across the country. I am well aware that avian influenza has been a problem for multiple administrations – including the Obama Administration, the first Trump Administration, and the Biden Administration. Regardless, I am interested to hear how you, if confirmed, plan to end the current outbreak and lower prices.

According to data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), wholesale prices for a dozen Grade A large white eggs in cartons increased 14.5% since President Trump took office. In order to combat these price spikes, we must have a strong response from the USDA to get avian influenza under control. In addition, the USDA, in conjunction with other federal agencies, including the Federal Trade Commission and the Department of Justice, must carefully police the market and crack down on any price gouging by large egg producers, who in the past have demonstrated a propensity to hike prices on consumers to levels that far exceed any increase in the cost of production.

In your written testimony for your January 23rd nomination hearing, you shared that one of your “key priorities for Day One,” if confirmed as Secretary would be to “immediately and comprehensively get a handle on the state of animal-disease outbreaks, including H5N1.” However, when asked for your plan to address this issue by Ranking Member Amy Klobuchar, you did not provide a comprehensive plan, and instead stated “there is a lot that I have to learn” about avian influenza and animal disease.

As Agriculture Secretary, you would be tasked with spearheading and implementing the Trump Administration’s plan to combat this costly disease in our nation’s animals. I understand that it may be difficult to outline a comprehensive plan during the time allotted in a confirmation hearing. To that end, I would like to provide you the opportunity to outline your plan in writing to address avian influenza and bring egg prices down for Americans across the country.

To allow me to fully evaluate your nomination, I ask that you respond promptly before your final confirmation vote.

I appreciate in advance your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed
United States Senator