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AFIA-FOUNDED COALITION SCORES MAJOR WIN AGAINST ANIMAL RIGHTS AND ECO TERRORISM WITH HOUSE PASSAGE OF LANDMARK LAW

ARLINGTON, VA. – The American Feed Industry Association (AFIA) applauded yesterday’s unanimous approval by the House of Representatives of the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act (AETA), S. 3880. House action followed approval by the Senate on September 30. The bill now goes to the President who is expected to sign it.

AFIA, a founding member of the Farm Animal Welfare Coalition (FAWC), an ad hoc Washington, DC coalition of the nation’s largest feed, farmer, rancher and biotechnology groups, played a key role in promoting the landmark legislation. FAWC was joined by 175 national, regional and state agricultural and science organizations along with related animal industry groups across the country.

AFIA President Joel Newman congratulated Congress on passage of the legislation, calling it “a tremendous step forward in dealing with one the nation’s greatest domestic terrorist threats—animal rights and environmental extremism.” Newman said, “AETA was sorely needed to provide law enforcement with additional tools to protect U.S. agriculture and science from violence by radical animal activists.”

The new legislation closes gaps in existing law and holds accountable those who intentionally disrupt or damage agricultural production and injure or intimidate those involved in it.”

Drafted with assistance from federal counterterrorism experts, AETA amends the federal criminal code to deal with increased radical animal rights and eco-terrorists violence. It extends protections for “animal enterprises” (housing and facilities legitimately using animals) to individuals, businesses and agencies, such as farmers, scientists, biomedical and biotechnology industries, research universities, teaching hospitals, financial institutions and other lawful commercial enterprises related to animal use. The legislation provides penalties for intentional economic damage and for causing bodily harm or placing an individual in reasonable fear of death or bodily harm.

Contrary to allegations by animal rights groups opposing the bill, the legislation does not in any way threaten First Amendment rights, and, in fact, explicitly protects all legal assembly, demonstrations and other legal public expression.

Besides agriculture and food production, broad support for the legislation included many organizations contributing to high standards of well being for animals. Among them were organizations representing biomedical research, universities, entertainment, exhibitions, education, clothing and recreation.

AFIA is the only national organization devoted exclusively to representing the business, legislative and regulatory interests of the total feed industry. Membership includes 550 domestic and international companies; state, national and regional associations. Firms are feed manufacturers, integrators, pharmaceutical companies, ingredient suppliers, equipment manufacturers and companies which supply other products, services and supplies to feed manufacturers.

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