

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Statement on The Heroes Act Provisions That Threaten Pet Ownership from Pet Industry Joint
Advisory Council President and CEO Mike Bober**

“The Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council and the responsible pet care community support the provisions in H.R. 925, The Heroes Act, that provide relief to those suffering from the impacts of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. However, Section 402—Trade of Injurious Species and Species That Pose a Risk to Human Health—goes beyond that scope, and could have a devastating impact on the legal and regulated movement of live animals within the United States, ultimately damaging the ability of Americans to experience pet ownership.

Section 402 vastly expands the role of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), yet has very little to do with controlling the introduction or spread of COVID-19 or any other disease. Empowering the USFWS to regulate interstate commerce would mean that any time a species was banned from importation due to a potential health issue overseas, it would also be restricted from movement within the United States—even in cases where the animals were bred and raised domestically. The USFWS would be forced to adopt a one-size-fits-all approach, prohibiting movement of a species across the entire United States, even if the potential for it to become invasive is limited to a small, climate-specific area. Making tropical pets or saltwater fish illegal to transport into the Midwest makes no logical sense.

We at PIJAC urge lawmakers as they continue to thoughtfully negotiate this important legislation to remove Section 402. Besides having nothing to do with mitigating the spread of disease to American shores, it will severely harm our country’s responsible pet care community and the future of pet ownership alike.”

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About PIJAC

Founded in 1971, the [Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council](http://pijac.org) (PIJAC) represents the experience and expertise of the responsible pet care community to legislative, regulatory, and governing bodies in order to promote animal well-being and responsible pet ownership, foster environmental stewardship, and ensure the availability of healthy pets. PIJAC members include retailers, companion animal suppliers, manufacturers, wholesale distributors, manufacturers’ representatives, pet hobbyists, and other trade organizations.