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Media Release

Association of Public Health Laboratories Applauds Senator Obama's Introduction of S. 3358, the "Improving Food-borne Illness Surveillance and Response Act of 2008"

Washington, DC— "The nation's state and local governmental public health laboratories are extremely pleased by Senator Obama's introduction of S. 3358, the Improving Food-borne Illness Surveillance and Response Act of 2008," said Frances Downes, DrPH, president of APHL and director of Michigan's public health laboratory. "Passage of this legislation would greatly enhance the ability of all state and local laboratories to monitor and measure food-borne illnesses in the US population," Downes continued, "dramatically reducing the incidence of disease and its impact."

"The outbreaks of food-borne disease just over the past couple of years, including the most recent salmonella outbreak, provide more than sufficient evidence of the need to make significant improvements in the State and local capacity for surveillance, outbreak detection and response" said Downes.

"APHL has consistently advocated the need to strengthen and expand food-borne illness surveillance systems," said Phil Haines, DrPH, Chair of APHL's Food Safety Committee and former State epidemiologist for Maine, "and it is deeply gratifying to see that our message resonated so clearly in the provisions of the Improving Food-borne Illness Surveillance and Response Act of 2008." "S. 3358 offers an extremely sophisticated and carefully considered approach that would quickly produce measurable improvements in surveillance and detection," said Haines.

The Association of Public Health Laboratories is a national non-profit located in Silver Spring, Maryland, that is dedicated to working with its members to strengthen governmental laboratories with a public health mandate. By promoting effective programs and public policy, APHL strives to provide public health laboratories with the resources and infrastructure need to protect the health of US residents and to prevent and control disease globally.

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