

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

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Opening Statement of Chairman Raja Krishnamoorthi **Hearing on “Seresto Flea and Tick Collars: Examining Why a Product Linked to More than 2,500 Pet Deaths Remains on the Market.”** **June 15, 2022**

At the inaugural hearing of this Subcommittee in 2019, I noted it was created to focus on issues directly affecting Americans: “economic opportunity and fairness, consumer health and safety, and the overall quality of life.”

That’s why our activities include investigations into price-gouging in the shipping and food sectors, the infant formula shortage, neurotoxins in baby food, workplace harassment, the youth vaping epidemic, and—especially relevant now—inflation and rising prices.

Today, we’re delving into a question of consumer safety as well as overall quality of life by examining why a product linked to numerous pet deaths and other negative side effects remains on the market. That product is the Elanco Corporation’s Seresto flea and tick collar.

Today, our Subcommittee has released its report on the Seresto collar and how both Elanco and the EPA, which regulates the Seresto collar, failed to address Seresto’s known and deadly risks. As early as 2015—just a few years after the collar entered the U.S. market—an EPA investigation found that, among similar products, the Seresto collar “ranked #1 by a wide margin” in terms of total incidents, “major” incidents, and deaths, even after factoring in companies’ relative sales.

Those findings weren’t enough to drive the makers of the Seresto collar or the EPA to act. But, in 2016, Canada’s Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) concluded—based on a review of the same American data available to the EPA—that the collar posed too great a risk to pets and their owners to be sold in Canada. Therefore, Seresto has never been allowed in Canada.

Unfortunately, even as the death count rose, the EPA allowed Seresto to remain on the market here without even so much as requiring additional warning labels that regulators mandated in places including Australia, Colombia, and the European Union.

The companies that manufactured the Seresto collar—first Bayer Animal Health and then, since 2020, Elanco—were also aware of the risks, the incidents, and the deaths. But they, too, failed to act. Instead, they hired third party industry insiders to conduct so-called “independent reviews” of the incident data—which ended up protecting their 300 million dollar a year product, but ended up endangering pets. So the Seresto collar stayed the same, and so did the consequences.

Today, we’ll hear from witnesses who can speak about the Seresto collar, the failures of Bayer, Elanco, and the EPA, and the real costs of their collective choices. We’ll also hear from the families of pets that wore the collars and suffered the ultimate consequences.

As our witnesses today will testify, there’s no perfect, risk-free way of keeping our pets safe from every possible source of harm. That’s the sad reality. But it is still possible do all we can to protect the health and well-being of every pet. Sadly, our investigation has found evidence that the EPA and Elanco have failed to live up to that standard.

That's why I'm calling today on the EPA to initiate Notice of Intent to Cancel proceedings, which will ensure that a comprehensive review of Seresto and its risks is undertaken to determine what must be done. And in the meantime, to protect pets from further harm, I'm renewing my call for Elanco to do what the EPA cannot do, and that's immediately institute a voluntary recall of the Seresto collar until comprehensive safety testing can be completed. Now folks, this particular collar has caused 100,000 incidents reported to the EPA and over 2,500 pet deaths reported to the EPA. The steps that we are asking for are crucial because it's important to protect our pets and their families too.

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