

**Alliance for Community Trees
American Forest Foundation
American Forest & Paper Association
American Forests
American Nursery & Landscape Association
The Hardwood Federation
Michigan United Conservation Clubs
National Association of State Foresters
National Plant Board
The Ohio State University, Department of Entomology
Purdue University, Department of Entomology
Society of American Florists
Society of American Foresters
The Nature Conservancy
Union of Concerned Scientists
University of Georgia, Center for Invasive Species & Ecosystem Health**

March 12, 2008

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairperson
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food
and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jack Kingston
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food
and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Fiscal Year 2009 Appropriation for the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service,
Emerging Plant Pests

Dear Chairperson DeLauro and Ranking Member Kingston:

We urge the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies to increase funding substantially for the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Emerging Plant Pests program. A sharp increase in funding is necessary in order to ensure adequate funding for eradication and control efforts targeting the emerald ash borer, Asian longhorned beetle, sudden oak death pathogen, and *Sirex* woodwasp. All four foreign and invasive species threaten trees in our forests and communities and related economic values worth hundreds of billions of dollars.

This coalition represents a widely diverse group of stakeholders that are unified in support of the following program areas. This statement of common goals supplements individual letters submitted to the Subcommittee by several of these organizations. Some of these individual letters address additional issues.

We seek an appropriation of \$45 million for FY2009 to contain the emerald ash borer. This represents a significant increase over the current funding level of \$30 million. The emerald ash borer threatens sixteen species of ash across the continent, especially in the upper Midwest and Southeast. At risk are the \$25 billion ash timber industry in the Northeast, street trees across the Nation valued at \$20 to \$60 billion, and myriad trees found in our neighborhoods and parks. The emerald ash borer outbreak is large, but the core of the infestation remains in the lower peninsula of Michigan, Indiana and Ohio. It is absolutely crucial that APHIS and its partners carry out detection surveys and regulatory and educational programs aimed at preventing movement of infested firewood, nursery stock, and other materials that spread the insect. Movement of these materials has been responsible for long distance spread and the establishment of numerous outlying populations of the insect. APHIS and its state partners need additional funding in FY2009 to enable affected states to contain or eradicate limited and isolated outbreaks found in Illinois, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, as well as on Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Education, effective quarantine, and elimination of isolated infestations are necessary to create the potential to contain the core outbreak. Recent breakthroughs and promising work on biocontrol agents and pesticides must also be funded.

We seek an appropriation of \$30 million for FY2009 to carry out eradication of the few remaining populations of the Asian longhorned beetle. The FY2008 appropriation is \$19.8 million. The Asian longhorned beetle poses an alarming threat to hardwood forests reaching from New England into Minnesota and in the West, and to the hardwood timber, maple syrup, and autumn foliage tourism industries dependent on these forests. Also at risk are street trees across the Nation valued at more than \$600 billion. Eradication has been successful in Chicago and parts of New Jersey, proving the efficacy of this approach. Remaining beetle populations in New Jersey are well on track for eradication. Only the populations in New York persist – and that is because funding for the New York effort has been reduced in past years. It is essential to provide sufficient funding now and in coming years to complete eradication in New Jersey and New York. The detection of an outbreak on Staten and Prall's islands in March 2007 is an indication of the risk placed on the environment due to chronic under-funding of these programs.

We support a request for \$10 million in appropriations for FY2009 to contain a third damaging forest pest, the sudden oak death pathogen (also called the phytophthora leaf and stem blight pathogen). Our request would almost double the FY08 appropriation of \$5.3 million. This disease is a major threat to the nation's nursery industry as it readily attacks species such as rhododendron, camellias, and a long list of other common ornamentals. In addition, if sudden oak death does escape confinement, it threatens oaks in forests in Oregon and Washington as well as throughout the Appalachians, Ozarks, and even into southern New England. Many wildlife species are dependent upon oaks and other threatened forest species for forage - the potential for devastating impacts on forests and wildlife is very real.

The *Sirex* woodwasp is now found across much of New York State, four counties in Pennsylvania, one county in Vermont and two counties in Michigan, as well as in Ontario, Canada. The woodwasp threatens valuable pine timber resources, especially those of the Southeast. It is

essential that APHIS receive \$5 million in FY2009 to implement a program including regulatory and educational components aimed at preventing movement of infested wood, nursery stock, and other materials that spread the insect. Congress did not appropriate any funding for the *Sirex* woodwasp in FY08, despite the threat posed by the woodwasp to pine harvests across the Continent. Additionally this funding would support the establishment of available biocontrol organisms to manage this pest on a long term basis.

In addition to the appropriations needed to support these line items in APHIS's Emerging Plant Pest program, we also strongly support the Congress' numerous statements urging the Administration to release emergency funds from the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) sufficient to enable full implementation of these management plans. The combination of the appropriations and the release of CCC funds are necessary to accomplish the needed tasks.

Action now at the funding level requested would help ensure that these forest pests do not reach populations so large as to threaten trees in our forests and communities, garden nursery stock, and related economic activities worth hundreds of billions of dollars.

Sincerely,

Drue Deberry, Senior Vice President, Conservation, American Forest Foundation
Dr. G. Keith Douce, Co-Director, Center for Invasive Species & Ecosystem Health, and Professor of Entomology, College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences, University of Georgia
Jay Farrell, Executive Director, National Association of State Foresters
Deborah Gangloff, Executive Director, American Forests
Michael Goergen, Executive Vice-President, Society of American Foresters
Walker Gray Haun, President, National Plant Board
Deb Hawkinson, Executive Director, The Hardwood Federation
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Dr. David Moorhead, Co-Director, Center for Invasive Species & Ecosystem Health, and Professor of Silviculture, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of Georgia
Craig Regelbrugge, Senior Director of Government Relations, American Nursery & Landscape Association
Dr. Clifford S. Sadof, Professor, Department of Entomology, Purdue University
Lin Schmale, Senior Director - Government Relations, Society of American Florists
Donna Stine, Deputy Director for Policy, Michigan United Conservation Clubs
Dave Tenny, Vice President, Forestry and Wood Products, American Forest & Paper Association
Alice Ewen Walker, Executive Director, Alliance for Community Trees
Nat Williams, Acting Director of Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy
Phyllis N. Windle, Director, Invasive Species, Union of Concerned Scientists