

American Forest Foundation  
American Nursery & Landscape Association  
California Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers  
City of Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation Bureau of Forestry  
The Davey Institute  
Grantham Foundation for the Protection of the Environment  
Greenspace-the Cambria Land Trust  
Massachusetts Association of Campground Owners  
National Association of RV Parks & Campgrounds  
National Association of State Foresters  
National Ornamentals Research Site at Dominican University of California  
Purdue University, Department of Entomology  
Society of American Florists  
Society of Municipal Arborists  
The Nature Conservancy

Tuesday, April 19, 2011

The Honorable Herb Kohl  
Chairperson  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food  
and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food  
and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Fiscal Year 2012 Appropriation for the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service,  
Emerging Plant Pests

Dear Chairperson Kohl and Ranking Member Blunt:

We urge the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies to maintain current funding levels for the line "Tree and Wood Pests" under the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Plant Health. Maintaining current funding is necessary in order to ensure adequate funding for eradication and

control efforts targeting the Asian longhorned beetle, emerald ash borer, and sudden oak death pathogen; to allow APHIS to maintain its efforts to curtail spread of a variety of damaging pests through movement of firewood; and to enable APHIS to address new threats, most prominently the goldspotted oak borer. Further, we support the Administration's requested funding level for sudden oak death, which is contained in the "Specialty Crop Pests" line.

We recognize the importance of reducing government spending. However, forests and urban trees are a treasured and integral part of American life. Forested landscapes cover 1.15 million square miles in the United States. Every American derives some type of value from forested land, whether in the form of wood products for construction or paper, neighborhood amenities, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, or spiritual inspiration -- or the jobs associated with these values. The U.S. lumber and paper industries employ 1.3 million people. In Vermont alone, the maple sugar industry provides 4,000 seasonal jobs. Tourism based on fall foliage displays attracts one million tourists who annually generate \$1 billion in revenue in New England.

American forest ecosystems are under siege by a growing number of exotic forest pests. Close to 500 species of invertebrates and pathogens from other countries have become established in the country, and a new damaging pest is introduced, on average, every 2 to 3 years. It is APHIS' responsibility to prevent -- to the extent possible -- such introductions and to respond effectively when pests are introduced.

Our recommendation differs from the Administration request principally in maintaining the FY10 level of \$77 million for the "Tree and Wood Pests" category (which represents an increase of approximately \$16 million above the Administration's request). Within this category the Administration has proposed to cut the emerald ash borer program from \$37.2 million to \$13.6 million. The rationale provided -- that the agency is no longer cutting large numbers of trees in an effort to slow spread of the pest -- does not reflect the real focus of this program as APHIS has not paid for large-scale tree cutting for the past 4 fiscal years. Instead, program funding has been allocated as follows:

- Surveys of both distant sites at high risk of receiving emerald ash borer (e.g., firewood dealers, campgrounds, freight distribution centers) and around the edges of the known infestation - \$9.5 million
- Implementation of regulations intended to prevent spread of the insect via movement of wood products and nursery stock - \$9.5 million
- Outreach to encourage public compliance with the regulations and reporting of suspected outbreaks, as well as to discourage movement of firewood - \$2.5 million
- Testing and development of control techniques, including biocontrol - \$2.8 million
- Costs of APHIS program management - \$11 million

An appropriation of at least \$25 million is needed to maintain all critical components of the EAB program. This is \$10 million less than the program currently receives.

Notwithstanding that reduction, retaining the FY10 level of \$77 million in the "Tree and Wood Pests" category is critical to sustaining important APHIS' programs targeting several tree pests and expanding programs to address additional threats. These include:

- innovative efforts to reduce pests' spread in firewood and other pathways;
- development of biocontrol agents targeting several pests; and
- initiation of efforts to prevent spread of the goldspotted oak borer from San Diego County to the rest of California and to other states. This insect has already killed between 20,000 and 50,000 California live oak and black oak trees in less than 15 years. The insect threatens oaks throughout California, including close to 300,000 oak trees growing in greater Los Angeles and trees in Yosemite Valley. APHIS should establish a quarantine and evaluate whether oak trees in the Southeast are at risk.

These vitally important programs are leveraged by collaborations with other federal agencies, the states, and numerous academic, non-governmental, and commercial entities. If reduced funding hampers these efforts, forests across the Nation will be at increased risk from Asian longhorned beetle, emerald ash borer, thousand cankers disease, laurel wilt, and a host of other wood-inhabiting pests.

Thank you for considering our views. We would be pleased to answer any questions you might have; to that end, please feel free to contact Faith Campbell, The Nature Conservancy ([fcampbell@tnc.org](mailto:fcampbell@tnc.org)) and she can assist in responding.

Yours,

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 Robert Bendick, Director of U.S. Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy  
 Jay Farrell, Executive Director, National Association of State Foresters  
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