



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Washington, DC
20250

Mr. Paul De Morgan
Senior Mediator
Resolve
1255 23rd Street, NW
Suite 275
Washington, DC 20037

NOV 15 2010

Dear Mr. De Morgan:

Subject: Firewood from Mexico and Canada

APHIS values its relationship with the participants in the Continental Dialogue, and we share the group's concerns about the effects of invasive pests on our Nation's forests. We appreciate the Continental Dialogue's support for initiatives such as the implementation of National Firewood Task Force recommendations. Analysis of pests and their pathways is essential to ensure our actions effectively address the risks. Therefore, I was much interested to read the concerns that members of the Continental Dialogue have about firewood imported from Mexico and Canada and the group's support for amendment of 7 CFR § 319.40-3 (i) and (ii).

We are studying and evaluating the pest issues of firewood from Mexico. The walnut twig borer (*Pityophthorus juglandis*), the gold-spotted oak borer (*Agrilus coxalis*), and the soapberry borer (*Agrilus prionurus*) are all found in the United States, though they have limited distribution. When the evaluation is complete, APHIS will consider whether changes to the import requirements are needed. A regulatory change in the status of firewood from Mexico would require a risk management document or Commodity Import Evaluation Document.

We also are working through the regulatory process to change the requirements for firewood from Canada. This decision is based on the risks from specific quarantine significant pests.

We take the threats to America's forests seriously, and we will continue identifying ways to enhance the protection of them. Stakeholder perspectives are an essential element in achieving this goal, and we look forward to continuing our partnership in this work.

Sincerely,

Rebecca A. Bech
Deputy Administrator
Plant Protection & Quarantine

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