

**The Hardwood Federation
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of State Foresters
The Nature Conservancy
Society of American Foresters**

March 16, 2007

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

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

Re: Fiscal Year 2008 Appropriation for the USDA Animal and
Plant Health Inspection Service, Emerging Plant Pests

Dear Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member:

The Hardwood Federation, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, National Association of State Foresters, The Nature Conservancy, and Society of American Foresters 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 to the Subcommittee submitted by several of these organizations. Some of these individual letters address additional issues.

We seek an appropriation of \$45 million for FY2008 to contain the emerald ash borer. The emerald ash borer threatens twelve 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 and neighboring portions of Indiana and Ohio. It is absolutely crucial that APHIS and its partners carry forward detection surveys and regulatory and educational programs aimed at preventing movement of infested firewood, nursery stock, and other materials that spread the insect. APHIS and its state partners need additional funding in FY2008 to enable affected states to eradicate limited and isolated outbreaks found in Illinois, Maryland, Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Education, effective quarantine, and elimination of isolated infestations are necessary to create the potential to contain the core outbreak in and around Michigan.

We seek an appropriation of \$30 million for FY2008 to carry forward eradication of the few remaining populations of the Asian longhorned beetle. 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, proving the efficacy of this approach. 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 to focus the inadequate overall resources on Illinois and New Jersey. It is essential to provide sufficient funding now and in coming years to complete eradication in New Jersey and New York. The identification of another population on an island near Staten Island just this past week 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 FY2008 to contain a third damaging forest pest, the sudden oak death pathogen (also called the phytophthora leaf and stem blight pathogen). 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 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 and two counties in Pennsylvania, as well as in Ontario, Canada. The woodwasp threatens valuable pine timber resources, especially those of the Southeast. It is essential that APHIS receive \$3.6 million in FY2008 to implement a program including regulatory and educational programs aimed at preventing movement of infested wood, nursery stock, and other materials that spread the insect.

In addition to the appropriations needed to support these line items in APHIS's Emerging Plant Pest program, the Hardwood Federation, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, National Association of State Foresters, The Nature Conservancy, and Society of American Foresters 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 is 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,

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