

Written Public Testimony from Members of the Coalition Against Forest Pests  
Prepared by Faith T. Campbell, President,  
Center for Invasive Species Prevention

Signatories:

American Forest Foundation, American Forests, AmericanHort, California Forest Pest Council,  
Center for Invasive Species Prevention, National Alliance of Forest Owners,  
National Association of State Foresters, Tree Care Industry Association,  
Vermont Woodlands Association

Submitted to the Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related  
Agencies

Agency: USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
March 20, 2020

The Coalition Against Forest Pests (CAFP) consists of non-profit organizations, for-profit entities, landowners, state agency associations and academic scholars who have joined together to improve our nation's efforts to address forest health threats. We write to ask your support for adequate funding of programs managed by the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) that help keep the nation's forests healthy by preventing introduction and spread of invasive pests. **Specifically, we ask the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies to maintain in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 the FY2020 funding levels for four "lines" under the USDA APHIS Plant Health program: "Tree and Wood Pests," "Specialty Crops," "Methods Development," and "Detection Funding".**

Forests occupy approximately one-third of the land area of the United States. Every American benefits from the wood products, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, clean water and air, aesthetic enjoyment, and associated jobs these forests provide.

Unfortunately, our enjoyment of these benefits is threatened by non-native insects and diseases. The best documented losses are in cities and suburbs; municipal governments across the country spend more than \$2 billion per year to remove trees on city property that have been killed by non-native pests. Homeowners spend \$1 billion every year to remove and replace trees on their properties and absorb an additional \$1.5 billion in reduced property values. As new pests are introduced, and established pests spread, these costs will only continue to rise. For example, the polyphagous and Kuroshio shot hole borers are projected to cost municipalities and homeowners in California \$36.2 billion if their spread is not prevented.

The risk that new pests will be introduced is closely tied to international trade. In 2017, an estimated 17,650 shipping containers per year (or 48 per day) carried wood-boring insects to North America. Examples include the Asian longhorned beetle, emerald ash borer, and more recently the Kuroshio shot hole borer.

Other pests, such as gypsy moths and spotted lanternflies, reach our shores as egg masses attached to imported steel or vehicles, to containers, or the ships themselves.

Another type of import which poses a risk of introducing forest pests is imports of living plants, or plants for planting. Examples of introductions suspected to be associated with movement of live plants are the sudden oak death pathogen and – in recent years -- two pathogens threatening the most widespread tree in Hawai'i, 'ōhi'a lehua, and beech leaf disease.

APHIS must be able to respond to these pests and to the others that will be introduced in coming years. To do so, the four APHIS programs need to be supported at current levels. For this reason, we ask you to continue to fund them at the FY2021 levels.

Funding through the “Tree and Wood Pests” budget account currently supports eradication and control efforts targeting only three insects: the Asian longhorned beetle (ALB), emerald ash borer (EAB), and gypsy moth. Each is responsible for billions of dollars in damage each year. The program to eradicate the ALB has been funded at about \$40 million in recent years. It has succeeded in eradicating 85% of the infestation in New York and some of the outlying infestations in Ohio. There is encouraging progress in Massachusetts, although infested trees were recently detected in a new town within the quarantine zone. This program must be maintained until final success in all states.

The EAB program has been funded at \$7 million in recent years. APHIS has proposed to terminate the emerald ash borer regulatory program. Many stakeholders have urged APHIS to continue its engagement on options to curtail movement of firewood and other materials that facilitate the ash borer's spread. We ask the Committee to adopt report language which advises APHIS to utilize the increase in funding to respond to these stakeholders' pleas.

The “Specialty Crops” program provides funds for APHIS' regulation of nursery operations to prevent spread of the sudden oak death (SOD) pathogen. Were the pathogen to spread to the East, it would threaten such important eastern forest tree species as northern red oak, chestnut, white, and pin oaks; sugar maple; and black walnut. It is therefore alarming that in 2019, plants infected by the SOD pathogen were shipped to 18 states. APHIS must step up its regulatory efforts to prevent a repetition of this disaster. Furthermore, this budget line should support efforts to manage the spotted lanternfly, which had been managed through a combination of emergency funding under 7 U.S.C. §7772 and grants funded through the Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Program (§7721 of the Plant Protection Act).

As noted above, CAFP supports continued funding of the “Methods Development” program at the FY20 level of \$21 million. This program assists APHIS in developing detection and eradication tools essential for an effective response to new pests.

Similarly, CAFP supports continued funding of the “Detection” budget line at \$28 million. This program supports the critically important collaborative state –federal program that detects newly introduced pests. Successful eradication and containment programs depend on such early detection. Such programs prevent more widespread pest damage, loss of forestland, and associated costs and job losses.

We appreciate the opportunity to share this testimony, and we look forward to continuing to work with the Subcommittee to further the goal of ensuring adequate funding in

the FY21 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Appropriations bill for critical pest-prevention and control programs.

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