

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

March 30, 2006

The Honorable Henry Bonilla, Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug
Administration and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

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

Re: Fiscal Year 2007 Appropriation for the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service,
Emerging Plant Pests Program

Dear Mr. Chairman / Ranking Member:

The Society of American Foresters, National Association of State Foresters, The Nature Conservancy, and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture 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, and sudden oak death. All three introduced organisms threaten forest and amenity trees and related economic activities worth hundreds of billions of dollars.

This statement of common goals supplements individual letters to the Subcommittee submitted by several of these organizations. These individual letters address additional issues which we do not include here.

We seek an appropriation of \$55 million for FY2007 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 and street trees across the Nation valued at \$20 to \$60 billion. The emerald ash borer outbreak is large, but the core of the infestation remains in the lower peninsula of Michigan – where it is

largely contained by the Great Lakes. It is absolutely essential that APHIS receive adequate funding in FY2007 to enable affected states to eradicate the limited and isolated outbreaks found in Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan's Upper Peninsula. It is also 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. Once the outlying outbreaks are eradicated, officials can begin efforts to quash the core outbreak in Michigan.

We seek an appropriation of \$30 million for FY2007 to carry forward eradication of the sole 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 \$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 York.

We seek \$9 million in appropriations for FY2007 to contain a third damaging forest pest, sudden oak death (also called the phytophthora leaf and stem blight). 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. This disease is also a major threat to the Nation's nursery industry as it readily attacks species such as rhododendron and other species used in the garden nursery business. Spread of sudden oak death is thus of enormous consequence to both native forests and the garden nursery business. In its impact on the oak species, it has the potential to devastate critical forage for many wildlife species as well.

Additional forest pests introduced into the United States and recently identified are currently being reviewed by scientific experts convened by APHIS and the USDA Forest Service. The most prominent example is the Sirex wood wasp, now present in New York, which threatens valuable pine timber resources, including those of the Southeast and eastern United States. The scientists' conclusions regarding the wood wasp and other species might result in additional funding needs.

The Society of American Foresters, National Association of State Foresters, The Nature Conservancy, and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture strongly support the Congress' numerous statements urging the Administration to release emergency funds from the Commodity Credit Corporation sufficient to enable full implementation of management plans for the exotic threats to our forest resources.

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

Sincerely,

Michael Goergen Jr.
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Society of American Foresters

James B. Hull
President
National Association of State Foresters

Jimmie Powell
Director of Government Relations
The Nature Conservancy

Richard Kirchhoff,
Executive Director & CEO
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture