



## WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

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September 26, 2001

The Honorable James Hansen  
Chairman  
Committee on Resources  
1324 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515-6201

The Honorable Nick Rahall  
Ranking Minority Member  
Committee on Resources  
1329 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515-6201

The Honorable Wayne Gilchrist  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Fisheries  
Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans  
188 Ford HOB  
Washington, DC 20515-6201

The Honorable Robert Underwood  
Ranking Minority Member  
Subcommittee on Fisheries  
Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans  
H2-186 Ford HOB  
Washington, DC 20515-6201

Dear Congressmen Hansen, Rahall, Gilchrist, and Underwood:

We support the enactment of an Invasive Species Act during the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress, an issue of critical importance to our communities.

Invasive plant and animal species present unique challenges to states and territories in protecting our fragile ecosystems. Beyond the ecological harm of invasive species -- which is considerable -- some studies estimate that the economic impact of invasive species exceeds \$137 billion per year. In addition, 46 percent of the plants and animals federally listed as endangered species have been harmed by invasive species.

The Western Governors' Association believes that the current federal approach to this important issue could be better organized and coordinated and assured of adequate funding. We support a comprehensive and coordinated federal strategy that will provide greater assistance and priority to helping states and territories control and eradicate invasive species.

We believe enactment of an Invasive Species Act with the following principles would represent a significant public policy advance and enjoy widespread support:

- Consolidate statutory authority for invasive species research, control and eradication on federal lands;

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- Provide authorization for increased funding for activities related to management plan development, research, control and eradication of invasive species;
- Provide authorization for funding of public education on the existence, threat, control and prevention of invasive species;
- Make decisions on land and resource management through local partnerships when formulating management plans. Provide special attention to local participation by the citizens of the three Pacific territories;
- Enhance current programs for invasive species control on federal lands within the Departments of Interior and Agriculture;
- Coordinate federal and state activities for invasive species research, control and eradication;
- Establish guidelines for invasive species control and eradication on federal lands;
- Create new options under the Endangered Species Act when the threat to a species is primarily caused by an invasive species;
- Address issues related to the introduction of invasives by commercial marine aquaculture operations that are harmful to native marine species; and
- Encourage and support consistent state programs that regulate vessel ballast water and interstate recreational boat inspection programs.

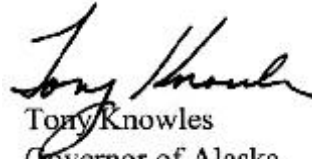
The Western Governors= Association looks forward to working with you on this critical issue.

The Honorable James Hansen  
The Honorable Nick Rahall  
The Honorable Wayne Gilchrist  
The Honorable Robert Underwood  
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Sincerely,



Carl Gutierrez  
Governor of Guam



Tony Knowles  
Governor of Alaska



Iuaese Sunia  
Governor of American Samoa



Jane Dee Hull  
Governor of Arizona



Gray Davis  
Governor of California



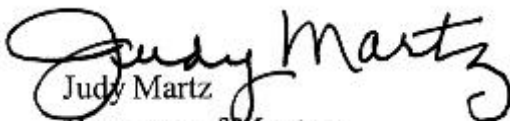
Bill Owens  
Governor of Colorado



Benjamin J. Cayetano  
Governor of Hawaii



Dirk Kempthorne  
Governor of Idaho



Judy Martz  
Governor of Montana




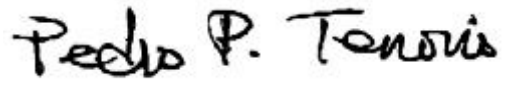
Mike Johanns  
Governor of Nebraska

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The Honorable Wayne Gilchrist  
The Honorable Robert Underwood  
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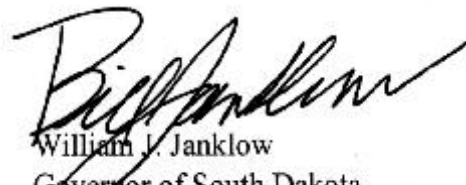
  
Kenny C. Guinn  
Governor of Nevada

  
Gary E. Johnson  
Governor of New Mexico

  
John Hoeven  
Governor of North Dakota

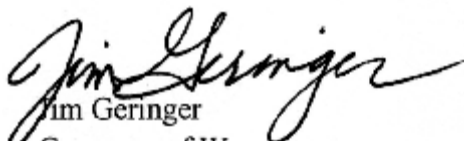
  
Pedro P. Tenorio  
Governor of Northern Mariana Islands

  
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Governor of Oregon

  
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Governor of South Dakota

  
Michael O. Leavitt  
Governor of Utah

  
Gary Locke  
Governor of Washington

  
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