Finding of No Significant Impact
for
Control of the Woodwasp *Sirex noctilio* F. (Hymenoptera: Siricidae) in the Northeastern United States
Environmental Assessment,
August 2008

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) that analyzes the potential environmental consequences of a program to control a nonnative, invasive woodwasp, *Sirex noctilio* (Hymenoptera: Siricidae). The EA, incorporated by reference in this document, is available from:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health inspection Service
Plant Protection and Quarantine
Emergency and Domestic Programs
Emergency Management
4700 River Road, Unit 134
Riverdale, MD 20737-1236

The EA analyzed four alternatives consisting of (1) no action, (2) quarantine only where APHIS would implement a quarantine area within and around *S. noctilio*-infested States or portions of States, (3) biological control only, using the parasitic nematode *Beddingia siricidicola* as a biological control agent, and (4) a combination of both quarantine and biological control (preferred alternative). Notice of the EA was made available in the Federal Register on July 21, 2008 for a 30-day public comment period. Eighteen comments were received on the EA. Seventeen of those comments were not related to the EA but to quarantine requirements. The eighteenth comment raised concerns about environmental release of the parasitic nematode *Beddingia siricidicola.* The commenter indicated that the fact that the nematode must be spread artificially is unproductive. However, many successful biological control programs require "artificial" spread of the agent. In the case of *B. siricidicola*, once released, *S. noctilio* will spread the nematode into new areas. The commenter also indicated that if the nematode was effective at controlling *S. noctilio*, it would have entered the United States with the pest. There is no evidence that if *B. siricidicola* was an effective control agent it would have entered the United States with *S. noctilio*. Many successful biological control agents have not entered with the pest but must be collected from the pest's country of origin and introduced into the United States. Finally, the commenter indicated concern that the nematode may be attacked by a native hyperparasitoid, rendering the project a waste of resources. Although native natural enemies could attack *B. siricidicola*, *S. noctilio* has been successfully managed in Australia, New Zealand, and South America by using the nematode as a biological control agent. Thus, APHIS believes that *B. siricidicola* will be successful in controlling *S. noctilio* in the United States.

APHIS' finding of no significant impact for this program was based upon the expected limited environmental consequences, as analyzed in the EA. The EA evaluated the potential

environmental effects of the various control options on human health and nontarget organisms, such as *Pinus* species, native siricid species and threatened and endangered species. The expected use of methyl bromide in the fumigation of articles from pine trees for the control of *S. noctilio* would be minimal and is well below levels that could contribute substantially to ozone depletion. Nontarget effects related to the release of the nematode *B. siricidicola* and the fungus *Amylostereum areolatum* are not expected due to lack of toxicity to nontarget organisms and low exposure for most of them. No human health impacts are expected from the release of *B. siricidicola* and *A. areolatum*. Exposure from the herbicides triclopyr or dicamba will be extremely low for all nontarget organisms and human applicators under labeled use due to the method of application in the *S. noctilio* control program. Finally, the preferred alternative will slow both the natural and human-assisted (artificial) spread of *S. noctilio*, thus offering the most protection to *Pinus* species in the United States.

APHIS has consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in States currently infested with *S. noctilio*, as required by the Endangered Species Act. In New York, Pennsylvania, and Michigan, APHIS determined that these activities may affect, but are not likely to adversely affect, listed species in those States with the implementation of certain protection measures and FWS has concurred with these determinations. APHIS determined that this activity would have no effect on threatened and endangered species or critical habitat in Vermont. If *S. noctilio* spreads into new States and *B. siricidicola* releases are planned, APHIS will consult with the appropriate FWS field office within the State before proceeding with program activities.

There are no disproportionate adverse effects to minorities, low-income populations, or children in accordance with Executive Order 12898 "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations" and Executive Order 13045, "Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks." Likewise, APHIS has consulted and collaborated with Indian tribal officials to ensure that they are well-informed and represented in policy and program decisions that may impact their agricultural interests in accordance with Executive Order 13175, "Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments."

An environmental impact statement (EIS) must be prepared if implementation of the proposed action may significantly affect the quality of the human environment. I have determined that there would be no significant impact to the human environment from the implementation of any of the action alternatives and, therefore, no EIS needs to be prepared.

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Date