

## **Regional Panel and State ANS Plan Funding Discussion**

Funding for essential ANS programs has remained level while the ecological and economic costs of ANS have continued to grow. The ANS Task Force, regional panels and state management plans together provide the critical infrastructure needed to implement effective ANS prevention and control. The lack of a strong financial commitment to these programs has severely impacted their capacity and therefore our ability to prevent and react to ANS threats. It is time we put forth a strong call for increasing commitment to these crucial programs.

Currently, Panel funding is locked in by law at \$300,000 annually with equal shares going to each of the six panels. This current cap for regional panel funding has remained fixed since NISA 1996 although full disbursement of the authorized amount did not occur until nearly all six of the regional panels were established. ANS problems pose steep challenges, particularly in light of the transboundary nature of ANS introduction and spread. This situation necessitates a regional management approach to solving ANS problems. As it currently stands, funding levels are grossly inadequate for the panels to effectively facilitate the coordination of ANS prevention and control programs among the states on a regional basis. Not only are opportunities for regional projects limited both in size and scope by these funding constraints, but also regulatory authority is rendered fragmented and ineffective within each of the delineated ANS regions. To build capacity for a regional ANS management approach to advance progress on prevention and control, there must be significant increases in regional panel funding.

State ANS funding is authorized at \$4M yet only \$1.075M is appropriated and has remained at this level since FY 2004 when only 14 state and 2 interstate plans were approved. Today there are 31 state and 2 interstate plans approved by the ANSTF with about a dozen more under development yet the appropriated amount remains stagnant. With \$1,075,000 currently available (vs. the \$4M in the law), each state currently receives only \$34,677 to implement their ANS management plans. At this low level of funding few states are able to provide at least one staff person whose sole responsibility is implementation of their state's management plan. A dramatic increase in funding to the fully authorized level is necessary allow states to increase prevention and control strategies identified in their ANS management plans.