



CALIFORNIA

◀ INVASIVE SPECIES

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

August 22, 2012

Secretary Karen Ross
California Department of Food and Agriculture
1220 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Secretary John Laird
California Natural Resource Agency
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1311
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretaries Ross and Laird:

After extended discussion at its meetings of May 24 and July 19, 2012, the California Invasive Species Advisory Committee (CISAC) has requested its Executive Committee to convey CISAC's grave concern about the impacts budget cuts are likely to have on California's ability to prevent the spread of invasive species. Not only can these organisms severely damage our state's agriculture and environment, the comparatively minor savings created by cutting funding to prevention programs can, and very probably will, result in the imposition of far greater direct economic costs to the taxpayers in the long run.

Above all, CISAC urges that high-risk inspection activities continue uninterrupted at current staffing levels, and that these programs be expanded if at all possible. Section PE-3 in California's recently adopted Strategic Framework on invasive species states in part: "Local, state, and federal agencies perform a variety of essential inspection activities designed to minimize the risk of invasive species entering the state. Additional capacity is needed to address the expanding number of pathways and increasing volume of trade and traffic." Especially as climate change increases California's vulnerability to an ever-increasing variety of invasive species, weakening the essential protections provided by Border Stations is likely to have ruinous consequences. At a minimum, this action would certainly lead to the increased necessity for implementing costly eradication and control programs. These programs are likely to intersect more frequently with societal concern over pesticides and their potential impacts on human health and the environment. Expenses incurred by ignoring invasive species now are sure to outstrip any transitory savings.



As a corollary to this recommendation, the committee also urges that surveillance and monitoring programs be maintained, for exactly the same reasons. When noxious pests do enter the state, identifying them before substantial populations become established offers by far the best hope of rapid response and cost-effective eradication. Section DR-4 in the Strategic Framework discusses the importance of maintaining and expanding surveillance programs.

In the course of their discussion CISAC members also expressed their dismay at funding cuts to biological control programs. It is the consensus of the committee that it would be advantageous to the people of California in both the short term and the long term to place a high priority on expanding these efforts, as recommended in Section EM-1 of the Strategic Framework: “For invasive species that are already widespread, biological controls may be the best and most economical long-term strategy for management . . . It is recommended that biological control efforts be increased among involved state and local agencies for targeted invasive species, and that cooperation and integration with the United States Department of Agriculture biological control programs be strengthened.”

These recommendations represent the considered judgment of the diverse stakeholders serving on CISAC, and we submit them to you as Chair and Vice Chair of the Invasive Species Council of California (ISCC) with the request that they be presented to ISCC for consideration, and for implementation to the greatest extent possible.

Sincerely,



Andrea Fox
CISAC Chair



Victoria Brandon
CISAC Vice-Chair



Christiana Conser
CISAC Secretary



Doug Johnson
CISAC Past Chair