

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
AND THE NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCY

CALIFORNIA INVASIVE SPECIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE
DRAFT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

LISTENING SESSION WITH COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE,
E-MAIL, AND WEBCAST/TELEPHONIC AUDIENCE

THURSDAY, MAY 12, 2011 - 5:30 P.M. to 7:30 P.M.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
COASTAL HEARING ROOM, SECOND FLOOR
1001 I STREET
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

REPORTED BY: HOWARD A. TORCH, CSR NO. 11248

1 SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA; THURSDAY, MAY 12, 2011

2 AT 5:30 P.M.

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5 TELEPHONE OPERATOR: Now I would like to
6 introduce Mr. Doug Johnson.

7 You may begin, sir.

8 MR. JOHNSON: Great. Thank you.

9 And thank you, everybody in the room and
10 everybody tuning in, for being patient while the
11 technology got hooked up.

12 Yes, my name is Doug Johnson. I chair the
13 Invasive Species Advisory Committee --

14 Sorry. Shall I start over with the mic on?

15 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: There you go.

16 MR. JOHNSON: It might be good.

17 Good evening. My name is Doug Johnson. I
18 chair the California Invasive Species Advisory
19 Committee, and I want to welcome you to tonight's public
20 listening session for the second draft of the document
21 stopping the spread, of strategic framework, for
22 protecting California from invasive species.

23 I'm here with several other members of the
24 committee. I want to introduce myself a little bit more
25 and then ask each of them to introduce themselves, as

1 well.

2 I'm the executive director of the California
3 Invasive Plant Council, a nonprofit environmental
4 organization in Berkeley, and our work focuses on
5 wildland weeds and keeping them from impacting the
6 ecology of California through science, education, and
7 policy.

8 We have around 1,000 members statewide.
9 They're primarily natural resource managers who work in
10 parks and preserves.

11 MS. CONSER: Thanks, Doug. My name is
12 Christiana Conser, and I work for the San Francisco
13 nonprofit organization Sustainable Conservation, and our
14 Plant Right Campaign works with the nursery industry in
15 California to prevent the sale of invasive plants, known
16 invasive plants, and also new-plant introductions.

17 MR. GODFREY: Thank you. My name is
18 Larry Godfrey from the Entomology Department at UC
19 Davis, and since many of the invasive species are
20 insects, it's probably obvious, my interest in invasive
21 species. I conduct research and extension and
22 management programs on invasive species.

23 MS. FOX: I'm Andrea Fox with the California
24 Farm Bureau. I'm also vice chair of the California
25 Invasive Species Advisory Committee. I'm a policy

1 advisor for the Farm Bureau. I became involved in the
2 invasive species, because for farmers and ranchers,
3 insect pests and other invasive species are an everyday
4 reality, and something that we must deal with.

5 MS. PETERSON: My name is Betsy Peterson. I'm
6 director of technical services for the California
7 Association of Nurseries and Garden Centers, and also
8 the California Seed Association. And I've served on the
9 CalHIP Steering Committee, now the Plant Right Campaign,
10 since its inception about six years ago.

11 My involvement in the invasive species is -- is
12 invasive pests of all kinds impact our agricultural
13 associations that we represent on a daily basis, and
14 we're always looking for new ways to mitigate and to
15 protect the farmer and ultimately the consumer in
16 California.

17 MR. GUISE: Hello. I'm Vince Guise. I'm the
18 agricultural commissioner of Contra Costa County, and
19 I'm involved, of course, in trying to keep invasives out
20 of the State, for over 37 years now, and also to try to
21 protect our agriculture, the citizens of the State, and
22 the environment from invasive species.

23 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you all. I think this may
24 have gotten lost when I started without the microphone
25 on, but I do want to thank everybody for being patient

1 with our late start as we got the technology going.

2 Also, I want to say before I -- give a little
3 bit of background on the organization that we represent,
4 the Advisory Committee, and the strategic framework,
5 that the information presented tonight is all available
6 online. Many folks may already have used this to find
7 out about tonight's meeting, but [www.iscc](http://www.iscc.ca.gov) -- for
8 Invasive Species Council of California -- [.ca.gov](http://www.iscc.ca.gov).

9 So first I want to give a little background on
10 the Invasive Species Council of California as well as
11 the advisory committee that we serve on.

12 The Invasive Species Council of California was
13 formed by six State departments in 2009 to coordinate
14 and strengthen the State's response to invasive species.

15 The ISCC comprises the secretaries of those six
16 agencies. It is chaired by the Secretary of the
17 Department of Food and Agriculture, vice chaired by the
18 Secretary of the Natural Resources Agency. And then
19 other agencies on the committee are the California
20 Environmental Protection Agency; the Business
21 Transportation and Housing Agency, where Caltrans is;
22 the Emergency Management Agency; and the Health &
23 Human Services Agency.

24 The Invasive Species Council formed an advisory
25 committee, the California Invasive Species Advisory

1 Committee, or CISAC, which we serve on, along with other
2 stakeholder representatives.

3 There are 24 stakeholder representative
4 positions on the advisory committee, and we represent a
5 number of constituencies. As you'll see tonight, we
6 have representatives from environmental organizations as
7 well as representatives from agricultural
8 organizations -- we have academia, we have federal and
9 local agencies, and lots of broad representation.

10 But being that this issue touches on virtually
11 every Californian, one of the primary goals of the
12 advisory committee is to enhance to the degree of public
13 engagement and to get all the viewpoints and all the
14 expertise in the states to bring to bear on these
15 problems, so tonight's listening session can definitely
16 contribute to that, so we're pleased that you're here.

17 Now, as one of the primary tasks of the
18 advisory committee, we have been charged with developing
19 a strategic planning document to help California
20 agencies strengthen response to invasive species, and
21 this framework document that we're looking for public
22 input on tonight and until June 17th is our effort to
23 address that, that task.

24 Now, fortunately, we have a lot to build on. I
25 brought tonight some of the resources we used. This is

1 the National Invasive Species Management Plan, passed in
2 2001 and revisited in 2008 with their major revision.

3 Other states, some 20 have plans like this. We
4 picked, in particular, Minnesota's plan, the Arizona
5 Invasive Species Council's plan, and the Washington
6 State Invasive Species Council's plan as good models for
7 both content and structure of a plan.

8 And in addition, we already have some plans
9 existing in California that we built on. This is the
10 2005 California Noxious and Invasive Weed Action Plan
11 and the 2008 California Aquatic Invasive Species
12 Management Plan.

13 So what we developed is meant to be a fairly
14 high-level umbrella plan that encompasses these kinds of
15 plans that have a lot of detail in them about what can
16 be done for certain types of invasive species.

17 Now, the strategic framework presents some 40
18 recommendations in various -- various categories for
19 ways a state can strengthen their response to invasive
20 species, and this is what we're looking for your input
21 on tonight.

22 I'll just mention that there are -- some of the
23 high-priority ones that are called out in the executive
24 summary to focus on prevention. We agree on the
25 Committee that that is the highest-priority place to

1 focus or efforts to make sure that invasive species are
2 kept from being intruded into the state in the first
3 place, because that eliminates the need for expensive
4 programs to address them.

5 So those two items include actually identifying
6 pathways that are continually evolving with all the
7 transport and transit and travel.

8 Currently, there are a number of pathways for
9 invasive species to come in, and we don't feel like all
10 of them have really been identified in detail, and then
11 secondly, to have an active interagency working group to
12 enhance coordination on those particular -- addressing
13 those particular pathways.

14 Second, once -- once a species comes in, it's
15 much easier and more cost effective to address it
16 quickly before it can spread -- commonly called "early
17 detection and rapid response." This is something we
18 want to emphasize, as well.

19 There are a lot of programs already existing in
20 agencies, and we want to make sure that those are as
21 prepared as possible, so we're recommending a
22 rapid-response working group so that responses can be
23 thought out ahead of time and discussed and shared with
24 the public to get input.

25 We also think that it is important to develop

1 and deliver a consistent message about invasive species
2 focused on stewardship. We're all here because we feel
3 like this issue is an important stewardship issue for
4 California, stewarding our natural heritage, the
5 environment, agriculture, and our public health. It
6 depends on both of those. And then finally, securing
7 long-term funding to support these kinds of programs.

8 Obviously in this day and age, budgets are
9 tight and there are a lot of competing needs, so this
10 issue, I think, needs to be looked at seriously, to look
11 for long-term costs and the benefit of investing now to
12 keep things from spreading and having more impact.

13 We're all aware of invasive species as a
14 problem that continues to spread. It's worse than an
15 oil spill, in that once you've spilled it, it continues
16 to grow, as opposed to just have a finite amount of
17 impact. So it's important to have steady funding to
18 avoid backsliding and allowing invasive species to
19 spread further.

20 So those are some of the priority actions.
21 There are lot of others in here, and you may have read
22 through and found some that particularly appeal or don't
23 appeal to you.

24 This is the second draft of this plan. We put
25 out an earlier draft last year and went through a round

1 of public comments and had made revisions based on those
2 comments. There is a document online located next to
3 the framework document that lists the revisions that
4 were made to the strategic framework based on public
5 comments previously.

6 So this is a listening session. We want to
7 listen to you. Before going to that, I want to just
8 remind everybody of the breadth of issues that we're
9 looking at here.

10 We're looking at invasive plants, invasive
11 vertebrates, invertebrates, and invasive diseases.
12 We're looking at organisms that are on land, organisms
13 that are on water. Some are more severe than others.
14 We know a lot more about some than we do about others,
15 so there is always an uncertainty factor.

16 The goal here with this document is to provide
17 a blueprint so that all stakeholders and agencies can
18 move forward together in an effort to be as productive
19 as possible in addressing invasive species in
20 California.

21 And the goal of tonight's session is to make
22 sure that we engage the public in commenting on the plan
23 and pointing out ways that you think it could be
24 strengthened.

25 So with that, if nobody has anything to add,

1 I'd like to open this up for public comment, and I think
2 it would be very useful to know, if you're able to tell
3 us, how many folks we have queued up.

4 I think our initial thought was to have
5 comments be timed for three minutes and to hold it to
6 that to make sure everybody gets a chance to be heard
7 from, and if there's time left at the end and folks want
8 to comment further, we can do that.

9 OPERATOR: There's no one online. Just one
10 gentleman here.

11 MR. JOHNSON: Let's start with comments from
12 the room. Anybody want to make a comment about the
13 document?

14 Okay. We'll wait for our online folks to join
15 in.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We have nobody.
17 Do you want to give them the call-in number?

18 MR. JOHNSON: Are they seeing that, or are they
19 seeing us?

20 OPERATOR: You might want to repeat the call-in
21 number.

22 MR. JOHNSON: To ask a question, I'm going to
23 repeat the call-in number. 877-960-9070, and the
24 passwords is CISAC, C-I-S-A-C.

25 (One-minute pause in proceedings at 6:04 p.m.)

1 MR. GUISE: I just wondered if this, the
2 introduction and at least the part up to now where
3 before I started talking, is going to be online for
4 people to view later, if they want to, or is it only
5 written and e-mail comments that will be reviewed or
6 available to them to see later on, because I think you
7 did an excellent job on the introduction.

8 And I think the draft, the new draft, was very
9 responsive to previous listening sessions, so I think
10 it's all positive. You know, what you said was great.

11 MR. JOHNSON: Yeah. That's a good question. I
12 don't know if the video will be up on YouTube or
13 something. We'll have to ask.

14 MR. LUGO: Doug, it's going to be available for
15 both audio and video.

16 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: You can download it
17 afterwards.

18 MR. JOHNSON: It sounds like the answer is
19 "yes."

20 If you're on the conference call and want to
21 ask a question, make sure --

22 Is it "Star 1"?

23 TELEPHONE OPERATOR: Yes. To ask a question
24 over the phone, please press "Star 1."

25 MR. JOHNSON: Great. Thank you.

1 Please go ahead.

2 TELEPHONE OPERATOR: Our question comes from
3 Peter.

4 Your line is open, sir.

5 PETER: Hello, everyone. My name is Peter. I
6 appreciate the work that you're doing. I'm familiar
7 with many of the folks on the panel. I appreciate the
8 efforts that you're doing.

9 I don't have a question, per se, but I do want
10 to communicate on the comments here that we -- I think
11 what you've done, the framework, is quite good. I think
12 you've helped think through some of the coordination
13 issues.

14 I look forward to the cooperation that
15 hopefully will be implemented with this plan. I'm
16 particularly interested in having the State make sure
17 that they fund programs for the local counties so that
18 they can do their weed control and other pest control,
19 and I think there's great opportunity for the industries
20 to work together with nonprofits and, of course, our
21 resource agencies.

22 So great work, keep it up, and thanks again.

23 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you for your comment,
24 Peter.

25 TELEPHONE OPERATOR: At this time, there are no

1 questions over the phone.

2 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you. We'll hold on.

3 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We do have a comment in the
4 room.

5 Is there a microphone?

6 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: There is.

7 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Yes.

8 MR. KAWAMURA: Hello. My name is
9 A.G. Kawamura. I'm currently a farmer down in Southern
10 California where I grow produce and distribute it both
11 locally and internationally and nationally, and I wanted
12 to make a comment that the CISAC's work and the Invasive
13 Species Council, as well, is incredibly critical at this
14 time for many reasons.

15 I know last year in Cancun during the
16 conference on climate change there were some experts
17 that came from around the country, as well as myself,
18 and had a chance to have a side-meeting, if you will,
19 about invasive species, trying to make sure that the
20 topic of invasive species as it's affected by climate
21 change was entered into the record of events down there
22 during the climate conference.

23 We noted in many ways that some of the these
24 different, important aspects about things, matters that
25 would greatly affect food and life systems in this

1 world, are not being discussed widely during these kinds
2 of dialogues that address climate change, that address
3 resource depletion, that address hunger and different
4 kinds of challenges for feeding a population of nine
5 billion people on the planet.

6 And so I think one of the things we wanted to
7 do in that last instance, and hopefully this next year
8 in Durban, at the next climate conference, and then
9 several other conferences that address both life and
10 food systems on the planet as we head into 2050 -- I'd
11 like to ask this council and the advisory group to be
12 especially focused on converging their activities with
13 other invasive species councils around the country,
14 converge their resources and activities with national
15 groups that address invasive species and international
16 groups, and see if we can't put together a platform.

17 If you can put together a platform, that helps
18 educate and create awareness about what an enormous
19 threat the challenges that come from invasive species of
20 all taxonomies is to the progress and sustainability of
21 life and food systems on the planet.

22 Without that, I think we unfortunately lose
23 sight of really hard lessons that we've learned from the
24 past, and more importantly, we start to see the
25 potential for tremendous disruption of those same

1 systems because of a laziness of phytosanitary
2 attention, phytosanitary care, quarantine, and
3 infectious services that protect from the introduction
4 of various pests and diseases.

5 And we start to realize that that
6 infrastructure that has protected us for so well and so
7 long, as it starts to deteriorate, it creates more
8 vulnerabilities than ever, especially in a world that's
9 more complicated than ever with a lot of challenges.

10 So I'd like to say thanks to this council and
11 this advisory committee especially for the great work
12 you've done. I'd like to insist, encourage, push, or
13 whatever kind of support you need.

14 I think the ag industry in general is very
15 supportive when they're reminded how important these
16 things are and at a time when I think many changes face
17 all kinds of endeavors from government because of
18 budgets, strains and stresses, critical infrastructure,
19 which is this component of exclusion, detection, and
20 diagnostics, are all part of the important
21 infrastructure that really needs to be in place. And I
22 applaud your efforts to help make that happen.

23 MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

24 Anybody online?

25 So it sounds like we have nobody online, so now

1 is your chance. Operators are standing by,
2 877-960-9070, and the passcode is C-I-S-A-C, and then
3 "Star 1" to queue up for a question or comment.

4 Once again, if you're joining us late online,
5 you can call in to provide a question or comment. I've
6 almost got this memorized now. 877-960-9070, and the
7 passcode is C-I-S-A-C, press "Star 1" to queue for a
8 question or comment. Thank you.

9 TELEPHONE OPERATOR: Excuse me. We do have a
10 question from John Hall.

11 Your line is open, sir.

12 MR. HALL: Hi, folks. This is John Hall, and I
13 just wanted to --

14 Can you guys hear me?

15 TELEPHONE OPERATOR: Yes, we can hear you.

16 MR. HALL: Sorry. I've got the 30-second delay
17 on my website. I was hearing that.

18 Yeah, I just wanted to say that this is great
19 work that you guys are doing, and specifically I wanted
20 to give my support for the creation of early detection
21 that works throughout California focused on all taxonomy
22 species.

23 MR. JOHNSON: Great. Thank you for your
24 comment, John.

25 MR. HALL: Thank you. Bye.

1 TELEPHONE OPERATOR: There are no further
2 questions or comments at this time.

3 Sir. Your line is open.

4 MR. HALL: Hi. Calling back. I do have a
5 couple questions now. I had a chance to read the
6 document, and I again appreciate your work.

7 Two questions: I'm reading that this plan was
8 in part developed to dovetail with the federal
9 government and what other states are doing. I'm
10 interested in learning more about how this might work
11 with the federal government's plan.

12 Recently I met -- kind of a collaborative weed
13 management group meeting and was hearing from the
14 federal government, of course, that their funds were
15 being cut, and they were actually looking at the
16 nonprofits to try to be doing more, so I'm wondering if
17 you could talk a little bit more about how these
18 partnerships might work.

19 And then the other thing I wanted to ask about
20 is that I've recently heard about some of the funding
21 being cut to the county -- to the counties and their
22 weed control and other pest control programs, and am
23 wondering in particular what those state cuts -- what
24 those impacts may be.

25 I understand they may be closing diagnostic

1 labs and other resources and cuts to projects and what
2 those setbacks might mean with respect to your ability
3 to move this plan forward. Thanks.

4 MR. JOHNSON: Interesting comments, Peter. I
5 think, unfortunately, this is meant to be a listening
6 session, for taking comments, so we're not prepared to
7 engage in a dialogue, but --

8 MR. HALL: Okay. Well, I thought there might
9 be an opportunity to ask a question, so I appreciate
10 that.

11 So then I think, from my own experience, my
12 comments would be that, again, the State being able to
13 find ways to keep those programs going, because in the
14 long term, once you walk away from projects where work
15 has been done, those areas are going to revert back to
16 what they are trying to be, which might be weedy.

17 So it's important for the State to continue
18 funding these efforts, because in the long run, if you
19 walk away from those projects, you're going to have a
20 rapid growth of -- and what I'm talking about here is
21 invasive weeds particularly -- and so what you're going
22 to do is you're going to lose ground in the long run.

23 Once those projects have to be dealt with
24 again, it's going to cost a lot more money, and so I
25 think trying to find some balance -- obviously

1 agriculture is important to the State, and so funding
2 for pest control to help keep our agriculture going is
3 very important.

4 But I'm hoping the State will try to find a
5 balance between not cutting all the weed-control
6 programs, weed-eradication programs, and hopefully we
7 can -- early detection and rapid response.

8 Anyways, keep up the good work. Thank you.

9 MR. JOHNSON: Thanks for calling back, Peter.

10 This is Doug Johnson. As chair, I'd like to
11 close this public listening session for this evening.
12 Thank you for participating.

13 TELEPHONE OPERATOR: Thank you for your
14 participation. You may disconnect.

15 (The proceedings adjourned at 7:30 p.m.)
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify that the foregoing comments or questions were taken down and reduced to typewritten form under my direction, and that the foregoing pages represent a true, correct, and complete record of the proceedings.

The above certification is expressly withdrawn and denied upon the disassembly or photocopying of the foregoing transcript unless said disassembly or photocopying is done under the auspices of Malibu Court Reporters and the signature and original seal is attached thereto.

I further certify that I am not a relative or employee or attorney of any party, nor am I in any way interested in the result of said cause.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have subscribed my name this 24th day of May, 2011.

Court Reporter in and for the County
of Los Angeles, State of California