



California Forest Pest Council

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Dedicated to protecting California's forests since 1951

www.caforestpestcouncil.org

California Forest Pest Council
612 Martha Way
Roseville, CA 95678

March 22, 2016

The Honorable Sam Farr
1126 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Federal Funding Levels for Forest Health Management

Dear Senator Farr:

The California Forest Pest Council requests your support for 2017 federal funding levels to be maintained or exceed those allotted for 2016 Forest Health Management programs – both federal and cooperative lands – and the Forest and Rangeland Research programs in the USDA Forest Service.

Forested landscapes cover approximately one-third of the total land area of the United States, including 136 million acres in urban environments. Our nation's forests and trees provide numerous benefits in both rural and urban areas. These benefits include wood products, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, clean water and air, recreational opportunities, and aesthetic enjoyment. Harvest of numerous woodland products and forest-associated recreation provide hundreds of thousands of jobs and generate considerable economic activity across all 50 states.

These benefits are at risk to attacks by non-native insects and diseases. While most of the monetized losses occur in cities, the threat is to all forests. In California alone, the polyphagous and Kuroshio shot hole borers (PSHB and KSHB, respectively) are spreading in southern California, threatening more than 300 plant species, including tree species that anchor the region's riparian areas as well as half of the trees planted in urban areas there. In San Diego County's Tijuana River Valley, more than 100,000 willows died from KSHB in less than 1 year, posing flooding and fire risks as well as biomass issues. These beetles may threaten susceptible species in other regions of the country if they go unchecked. The goldspotted oak borer continues to kill thousands of susceptible oak trees in southern California each year. It is now in four southern California counties with infested trees confirmed on two national forests (Cleveland, San Bernardino), and two other national forests are at immediate risk (Angeles, Los Padres). In 15 coastal California counties as well as Curry County, Oregon, sudden oak death has killed more than 3 million oak and tanoak trees. With more than 90% of California's forests still free from sudden oak death, there is still much concern over further spread. Sudden oak death also poses a risk to eastern forests as it attacks a wide range of trees and shrubs native to



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the east, including northern red oak, chestnut, white oak, pin oak, sugar maple, black walnut, mountain laurel, rhododendrons, and viburnum.

The cost to urban areas and homeowners is staggering: municipal governments across the country spend more than \$2 billion each year to remove trees on city property killed by non-native pests. Homeowners spend an additional \$1 billion to remove and replace trees on their properties and are absorbing an additional \$1.5 billion in reduced property values.

The USFS Forest Health Management Program is a critical resource supporting federal, state, municipal and landowner efforts to prevent, contain, and eradicate these costly and dangerous pests. The Program has supported Oregon's efforts to slow the spread of sudden oak death; Plains states' strategies to address the threat from emerald ash borer; whitebark pine restoration plantings in the Mountain states; and the decades-old, successful program to slow the spread of the gypsy moth. This program has been cut by 10% over the last five years, reducing its reach and effectiveness.

The USFS Forest and Rangeland Research program provides the scientific foundation for developing effective tools to detect and manage forest pests and the pathways by which they are introduced and spread. As America's forests face increasing pressure from the growing number of non-native pests, a greater research engagement is critical. For example, tools are desperately needed to detect and contain the polyphagous and Kuroshio shot hole borers. Pathways of introduction and spread require additional analysis, *e.g.*, wood packaging, nursery stock, and firewood.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. Please contact us with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Bob Rynearson
CHAIR, California Forest Pest Council

The California Forest Pest Council was founded in 1951 and is a non-profit educational organization of over 800 public and private forest managers, researchers, foresters, entomologists, pathologists, biologists, and others interested in the health of California's forests and protection from damage caused by animals, diseases, insects, pollution, and weeds.