
Coalition Against Forest Pests

The Honorable Gregory Ibach
Under Secretary of Agriculture, Marketing and Research Programs
US Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Room 228 West
Washington, DC 20250

Robert S. Simpson
GreenWoodGlobal Consulting, LLC
Facilitator - Coalition Against Forest Pests
1107 P Street NW
Washington, DC 20005

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Dear Mr. Under Secretary,

The Coalition Against Forest Pests (CAFP), a bipartisan coalition of agricultural and forestry organizations which seeks to create real and lasting change, by advocating for stronger national policies that work to combat the threat of forest pests, mitigate their existing impacts, and restore healthy forest ecosystems, congratulates you on your appointment as Under Secretary of Agriculture, Marketing and Regulatory Programs and welcomes you to Washington, DC.

We're eager to work with you to address the threat of introduced pests and pathogens which pose a continued and increasing peril to the health of our forests and to forest-based economies. Forestry contributes nearly \$282 billion to the US economy annually, contributing \$54.3 billion in payroll and providing 900,000 jobs for Americans, many of them situated in rural economies. Their ecological value has no price tag as they provide us with clean water, clean air, flood control, homes for wildlife as well as urban values relating to quality of life, sound reduction, run-off filtration and heat dissipation.

The CAFP stresses urgency to find solutions for our nation's forest pest issues. During the past century America essentially lost two tree species to invasive pests; the American chestnut and American elm. Within the next 50 years it is estimated that we may lose as many as 28 tree species to invasive pests including eastern hemlock, multiple species of ash and oak, American beech and redbay. These losses not only leave an empty place in our forests' canopies, and disrupt food webs and other ecological processes, but they deliver financial costs to our economy. It is estimated that losses from just one introduced pest, the Emerald Ash Borer, cost homeowners and municipalities approximately \$1.2 billion per year in detection, tree removal, and tree replacement.

The protection of America's national and private forests falls under the purview of the USDA APHIS and US Forest Service. However, forest pests do not respect National Forest boundaries. CAFP is looking to you and APHIS with its regulatory authority and programs to ensure and enhance programs aimed at preventing introduction of new pests as well as the early detection and eradication of those forest pests that have found their way across our borders and into the urban, private and National Forests of the US.

At your convenience, members of the coalition would like to meet with you and your staff to discuss the current issues facing our forests and share our thoughts on how we can work with you, your staff and USDA in keeping our rural, urban and wildland forests healthy and our forest-based economies strong.

Respectfully,

The Undersigned Members of the Coalition Against Forest Pests

American Forests

American Forest Foundation

American Horticultural Industries Association

American Public Gardens Association

Center for Invasive Species Prevention

Maine Forest Service

National Association of Forest Owners

National Association of State Foresters

National Woodland Owners Association

National Wooden Pallet and Container Association

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Vermont Woodland Owners Association