



March 29, 2021

The Honorable Peter Welch
United States House of Representatives
2187 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Welch,

On behalf of the Entomological Society of America (ESA) and the North America Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA), we write to express our appreciation and support for the introduction of H.R. 1389 - The Invasive Species Prevention and Forest Restoration Act.

ESA is the largest organization in the world serving the professional and scientific needs of entomologists and individuals in related disciplines. Preventing the introduction and establishment of invasive arthropod species is a top priority for the Society. NAISMA is a network of invasive species management professionals who implement programs to prevent the detrimental impacts of invasive species, including non-native arthropods, to North America's lands and waters.

Both organizations understand the economic, environmental, and health threats posed by invasive species, and we appreciate Congressional support for addressing these challenges. The estimated total global economic impact of invasive insects exceeds \$70 billion per year in lost goods and services, with \$6.9 billion per year in increased healthcare costs alone.¹ Invasive wood-boring arthropods like emerald ash borer, Asian longhorn beetle, and hemlock woolly adelgid have damaged forests from Vermont to California. Insects and arachnids from other countries and continents enter the U.S. through a variety of pathways and represent a growing challenge in an increasingly globalized world of trade and travel. Prevention and rapid response to new invasions are strategic investments that are more effective than trying to mitigate the impacts of invasive species once they become established. As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

However, limited access to emergency funding often hinders the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Agricultural Research Services (ARS), and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) in responding to emerging invasive threats. The identification in Washington state of Asian giant hornets highlighted the challenges of limited funding for responding to this invasive threat. The subsequent introduction of H.R.6761 - Murder Hornet Eradication Act of 2020 in the 116th Congress was intended to respond to that absence of emergency funding.

In addition to detection and eradication, support is also needed to identify more robust research strategies to respond. We appreciate the support for a research program focused on forest restoration and possible strategies to identify new biological controls, host-resistance mechanisms, and other strategies to promote and increase forest health.

¹ "Massive yet grossly underestimated global costs of invasive insects,"
<https://www.nature.com/articles/ncomms12986>

Climate change poses an urgent threat. As winters become warmer and shorter, the range and life cycles of invasive pests are likely to expand in locations where they are established.^{2,3} Therefore, we support the proposed recommendation in H.R.1389 of a study by the National Academy of Sciences and hope that greater coordination across USDA and the related coordinating agencies will better position us as a nation to respond to these complex, emerging threats. However, these recommendations should also include how to respond to new non-native threats driven by a changing climate. Even forest pests native to small portions of the U.S., like the goldspotted oak borer, are highly destructive when they move to new ecological niches.

Thank you for your attention to this issue. We appreciate the opportunity to share our thoughts on the threat posed by invasive species and to support H.R. 1389.

Best Regards,



Michelle S. Smith, BCE
2021 President, Entomological Society of America



Belle Bergner
Executive Director, NAISMA

Cc: Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick
Rep. Annie Kuster
Rep. Chris Pappas
Rep. Elise Stefanik
Rep. Mike Thompson

² Infographic: "How climate change can increase the number of pests per year,"
<https://www.entsoc.org/sites/default/files/images/SciPol/ESA-Climate-Change-Pest-Increase.jpg>

³ Infographic: "Projected climate-driven changes in tick population growth potential,"
<https://www.entsoc.org/sites/default/files/images/SciPol/ESA-Climate-Change-Population-Shift.jpg>