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Position: Fund the Noxious Weed Control and Eradication Act of 2004

THE ISSUE

Invasive weeds infest more than 100 million acres in the continental United States. This number is doubling approximately every five years. The impact of invasive weeds is profound, with an estimated \$32 billion in economic losses every year.

Other impacts include:

- Decreased agricultural production due to reduced crop yield and quality caused by invasive weed infestations.
- Reduced trade opportunities due to quarantine restrictions.
- Lost jobs and tax revenue due to decreased tourism and reduced agricultural production.
- Water shortages due to invasive plants such as saltcedar, in which one mature plant can use up to 200 gallons of water per day as it spreads throughout rivers and aquifers.
- Reduced land values on both public and private lands.
- Degraded wildlife habitat due to monocultures of invasive species that do not serve as food sources or nesting grounds.
- Reduced tourism and recreational opportunities such as hunting, fishing and boating in areas infested with invasive weeds.
- Greater soil erosion due to invasive weeds with shallow root systems that displace native vegetation.
- Increased intensity and frequency of wildfires due to dormant invasive weeds that provide a primary fuel source.
- Decreased biological diversity and overall environmental degradation due to invasive weed monocultures.

CURRENT LAW

The 2004 Noxious Weed Control and Eradication Act (NWCEA) is the product of a thorough and informed debate regarding how to combat the increasing threat of invasive weeds in the United States. As signed into law by President Bush, the law authorizes \$15 million in appropriations to control invasive weeds. To date, no funds have been appropriated to put the law into action.

When funded, the NWCEA will provide badly needed financial support for invasive weed management projects. Grants will be awarded to state and local land managers on a competitive basis to eradicate invasive weeds. The NWCEA will also provide early detection and rapid response grants to help affected states stop new weeds before they become widespread. Land managers often lament missed opportunities to halt invasions. The early detection and rapid response provisions create an opportunity to efficiently and quickly stop the spread of invasive species.

TAKE ACTION

We urge Congress to appropriate funding for the Noxious Weed Control and Eradication Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-412) at its authorized level of \$15 million for FY 2007.