

PETER WELCH
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CHIEF DEPUTY WHIP

HOUSE DEMOCRATIC
STEERING & POLICY COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

COMMITTEE ON
OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT
REFORM

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4500

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March 16, 2018

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Calvert, Ranking Member McCollum, Chairman Aderholt, and Ranking Member Bishop:

As the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies, and the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies consider the Fiscal Year 2019 (FY 19) Appropriations Bill, we urge you to provide robust funding to halt the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer.

Since its first detection in the United States in 2002, the Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis* or EAB) has been responsible for the destruction of tens of millions of ash trees in 32 states. Just last month, EAB was detected in Vermont for the first time.

The ecological destruction wrought by this invasive insect threatens not only native forests, but also the economy of communities across the country. These impacts are felt in rural and urban areas alike. In rural communities, the forest products supply chain is impacted by the loss of harvestable timber as well as the costs of complying with quarantine requirements. In urban areas, ash trees are a major presence in parks and along city streets, and the cost of removing and replacing them will be significant.

An effective response is essential during the time immediately following detection. The National Invasive Species Council has identified key steps for the government to take after a new invasive species has been detected. These steps include providing technical and financial support to impacted communities and supporting public outreach and educational efforts. The U.S. Forest Service, and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) are leading the federal response to this crisis by providing critical funding and technical assistance to help local communities respond effectively. As EAB continues to expand its reach, expanded funding is necessary to enable communities to mitigate its impacts. To that end, I am requesting an increase in funding to combat the spread of EAB, including the following:

- \$60 million for USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Tree and Wood Pests
- \$1 million for USDA Forest Service, Forest Health Management, Emerald Ash Borer

I thank you for your consideration of this request and look forward to working with you on issues related to invasive species moving forward.

Sincerely,



PETER WELCH
Member of Congress