



A.G. Kawamura
Mike Chrisman

Dear Secretaries Kawamura and Chrisman:

Members of the California Roundtable on Agriculture and Environment (CRAE) are aware that you have requested implementation of a California Invasive Species Council to be co-chaired by the Secretary of Food and Agriculture and the Secretary of Resources. CRAE enthusiastically supports your request and the recommendation that the Council be created by Executive Order to develop a comprehensive statewide invasive species strategic plan that articulates short- and long-term goals.

Since its inception in 2005, agricultural and environmental organizations that are members of CRAE have routinely joined together to urge that General Fund support be approved for the programs at the California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA) that monitor pests, prevent the introduction of new pests, or respond to pests using least-toxic or biological control strategies. However, California's ever increasing influx of people and commerce from domestic and international origins creates a serious risk from the unintentional introduction of exotic diseases and pests and there needs to be a well-coordinated strategic plan in place to better prepare for the continued onslaught of invasive species.

The prevention, early detection, and rapid eradication or containment of new invasive pests is necessary to protect California's public health, agriculture, economy, rich biological diversity, natural and environmental resources and quality of life. Invasive pests, weeds, and diseases cause severe damage to native biodiversity, public welfare, and the economy here in California and throughout North America. Unfortunately, preventable infestations continue to occur and increase these damages. It is important that California move swiftly to create an Invasive Species Council to strategically position the state to better protect agriculture and our state's natural resources.

In addition to the appropriate state and federal government representatives that should be included as members of the Council, CRAE strongly recommends that the creation of the Council include a stakeholder advisory committee to collaborate with the Council in the development of a strategic plan. We also recommend the Department of Food and Agriculture consider supporting the start-up costs of the Council through the current funding cycle of the Specialty Crop Block Grant. As members of CRAE, we stand ready to assist you in the effort to create a California Invasive Species Council and look forward to providing input into the process.

Sincerely, ...

Cc: Bob Gore, Governor's Office; John Moffatt, Governor's Office

CRAE is a broad coalition of agriculture, environment, labor and public agency leaders working to promote an agriculture that is economically viable, environmentally sustainable and socially responsible.

craegroup.org | Sponsor: Ag Innovations Network | 101 Morris Street, Suite 212, Sebastopol, CA 95472 | (707) 823-6111 | aginnovations.org