



Western Governors' Association Policy Resolution 13-02

Combating Invasive Species

A. BACKGROUND

1. The National Invasive Species Council defines an *invasive species* as “an alien species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.” In the West, invasive species may also include native plants, such as Pinyon-Junipers, that have over-dominated a landscape reducing the plant diversity to the point of impacting water quality and quantity, wildlife, fire threats, and agriculture production. The rapid spread of invasive species continues to be one of our country's biggest environmental problems and is creating economic and ecologic damage across our western landscapes and Pacific Islands.
2. Western Governors recognize that the spread of invasive species results from a combination of human activities, susceptibility of invaded environments, and biology of the invading species. These characteristics are not dictated by geopolitical boundaries, but rather by ecosystem-level factors, which often cross state borders. Scientists and land managers across the West have expressed the need to develop a strategy for more aggressive invasive species prevention, early detection, control and management.
3. Many of these invasive species were introduced, or their distribution was expanded, due to inadequate implementation of federal and state regulations dealing with interstate transport, international trade and interstate commerce.

B. GOVERNORS' POLICY STATEMENT

1. Western Governors support coordinated, prevention efforts of early detection and rapid response with multistate management and eradication actions to limit or eliminate introductions and improve control of invasive species expansion. Programs for the control and/or eradication of invasive species must result in more on-the-ground prevention, management and eradication. Western Governors also support research as an additional critical element needed to provide understanding of invasive species life cycles and to develop appropriate control measures.
2. Western Governors support efforts by Congress to properly classify invasive species to reduce barriers to participation in remediation activities by federal agencies in partnership with states.
3. Western Governors strongly encourage expansion and creation of partnerships, such as invasive species councils with representation from local pest and weed districts,

conservation districts, county governments, private organizations, local stakeholders, state, island, tribal, federal and international agencies to prevent the spread of invasive species, avert new unauthorized introductions, respond rapidly to new introductions, and work together to find creative new regional approaches for protecting and restoring natural, agriculture, power and water conveyance infrastructure, and recreational resources.

4. Western Governors urge Congress and the Administration to support invasive species control/management programs on state, U.S. Flag Islands, and federal lands. This should be accomplished through accountability and oversight of fund management under the National Invasive Species Act and programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), and the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, and the Fish and Wildlife Service. These programs provide valuable services in the detection and elimination of invasive species, as well as coordination, public outreach, and communication. Western Governors urge Congress and the administration to support much needed research on invasive species.
5. We encourage Congress to promote state-directed programs to combat invasive species. Regional leadership and state directed programs with local understanding and in partnership with federal land agencies can result in more accomplishments on the land.

C. GOVERNORS' MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE

1. The Governors direct the WGA staff, where appropriate, to work with Congressional committees of jurisdiction and the Executive Branch to achieve the objectives of this resolution including funding, subject to the appropriation process, based on a prioritization of needs.
2. Furthermore, the Governors direct WGA staff to develop, as appropriate and timely, detailed annual work plans to advance the policy positions and goals contained in this resolution. Those work plans shall be presented to, and approved by, Western Governors prior to implementation. WGA staff shall keep the Governors informed, on a regular basis, of their progress in implementing approved annual work plans.

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