

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Interim:
716 West 4th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
Phone (907) 269-0200
Fax (907) 269-0204
Rep.Craig.Johnson@legis.state.ak.us



Session:
State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska
99801-1182
Phone (907) 465-4993
Fax (907) 465-3872

REPRESENTATIVE CRAIG JOHNSON
RULES COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

**To: Representative Paul Seaton, Co- Chair
House Resources Committee**

**To: Representative Eric Feige, Co-Chair
House Resources Committee**

From: Representative Craig Johnson *CJ*

Date: February 22, 2011

Subject: Request for Hearing

I respectfully request that **HB 97**, relating to sunset of a state coordinator managing and educating the citizens of Alaska on the subject of noxious weeds, invasive terrestrial plants, and agricultural pests be scheduled for a hearing in the House Resources Committee.

We will need to be teleconferenced statewide. The number of testifiers will need to be discussed with the Chair depending on the amount of time limited for this bill's discussion.

Please feel free to contact me, or my aide, Jeanne Ostnes, with questions or thoughts at 465-6871.

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REPRESENTATIVE CRAIG JOHNSON
RULES COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

SPONSOR STATEMENT FOR **HB 97**

This bill will allow the Commissioner of Natural Resources to keep employed a state coordinator to manage and educate the citizens of Alaska on the subject of noxious weeds, invasive terrestrial plants, and agricultural pests. This coordinator works through the Division of Agriculture along with other state departments, agencies and institutions. This person brings together the aforementioned entities in addition to the University of Alaska Cooperative Extension Service and the Alaska Association of Conservation Districts.

Through this coordination the State of Alaska has begun to develop a strategic plan and requested Federal funding for survey projects. More importantly, a start toward limiting economic loss and adverse effects to the state's agricultural, natural, and human resources because of the presence and spread of noxious weeds, invasive terrestrial plants, and agricultural pests, in the state.

This bill repeals the sunset date of June 30, 2011.

HOUSE BILL NO. 97

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES JOHNSON, Stoltze, Gruenberg, Kerttula

Introduced: 1/18/11

Referred: Resources, Finance

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act extending a provision relating to noxious weeds, invasive plants, and
2 agricultural pest management and education; providing for an effective date by
3 repealing the effective date of sec. 2, ch. 102, SLA 2008; and providing for an effective
4 date."

5 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

6 * **Section 1.** Section 2, ch. 102, SLA 2008, is repealed.

7 * **Sec. 2.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
8 read:

9 **RETROACTIVITY.** If this Act takes effect on or after June 30, 2011, this Act is
10 retroactive to June 29, 2011.

11 * **Sec. 3.** Section 3, ch. 102, SLA 2008, is repealed.

12 * **Sec. 4.** This Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2011 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number _____
Bill Version HB97
() Publish Date _____

Identifier (file name): HB097-DNR-PMC-3-3-11
Title Noxious Weeds and Invasive Plants
Sponsor JOHNSON, Stoltz, Gruenberg, Kerttula
Requester HRES
Dept. Affected Natural Resources
Appropriation Resource Development
Allocation N. Latitude Plant Materials Center
OMB Component Number 2204

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	Appropriation Required		Information				
	FY 2012	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
OPERATING EXPENDITURES							
Personal Services	85.1	85.1	85.1	85.1	85.1	85.1	85.1
Travel	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Services	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Commodities	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
Capital Outlay							
Grants							
Miscellaneous							
TOTAL OPERATING	101.1	101.1	101.1	101.1	101.1	101.1	101.1

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES							
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CHANGE IN REVENUES							
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts							
1003 GF Match							
1004 GF	101.1	101.1	101.1	101.1	101.1	101.1	101.1
1005 GF/Program Receipts							
1037 GF/Mental Health							
Other (please identify)							
TOTAL	101.1	101.1	101.1	101.1	101.1	101.1	101.1

Estimate of any current year (FY2011) cost _____

POSITIONS

Full-time	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Part-time							
Temporary							

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version (if initial version, please note as such)

Not applicable, initial fiscal note.

Prepared by Franci Havemeister
Division Agriculture
Approved by Daniel S. Sullivan
Department of Natural Resources

Phone 761-3867
Date/Time 3/3/11 1:23 PM
Date 3/3/2011

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2011 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB97

Analysis

HB 97 would indefinitely extend the Invasive Weeds and Agriculture Pest Coordinator position within the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture. The authority for this position exists under AS 03.05.027, which will be automatically repealed on June 30, 2011 (Sec. 2 and 3, ch. 102, SLA 2008).

The Invasive Weeds and Agriculture Pest Coordinator position provides public information and education on invasive weed and pest control, conducts research on invasive weeds and pests, and represents the Division of Agriculture and the Department of Natural Resources on issues relating to the prevention, identification, and management of invasive species. This position is a Range 16, Natural Resource Specialist II located in Palmer.

Continued funding of the position would require \$101,100 in annual operating expenditures, including \$85,100 in personal services (one Range 16 NRS-II), \$5,000 in travel (in-state travel for weed management and outreach), \$5,000 in contractual services (technical assistance and facility operating expenses), and \$6,000 in commodities (supplies, tools, and equipment) necessary to fulfill the duties outlined in AS 03.05.027.

Invasive Weeds and Agriculture Pest Management Coordinator: Overview of Accomplishments

Established in statute by HB 330 in 2008, the Invasive Weeds and Agricultural Pest Coordinator (Coordinator) within the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture, has worked across multiple agencies and jurisdictions to further invasive plant management. Accomplishments of note include furthering key program components; initiating weed management projects; coordinating with industry, agencies, local entities, Canada and other states; providing comments to agencies on proposed projects; providing technical assistance; and participating in public outreach. Below are examples of accomplishments in each of these categories.

Core Program Components: Strategic Plan development and Regulation Revision/Development

A strategic plan was developed with coordination and review of local, state, and federal entities. The plan is currently drafted and out for public review.

Regulations have been drafted and are being reviewed by the Commissioner's Office prior to a going out for the public review process.

Weed Management Projects

The Coordinator has initiated 4 priority invasive species control and eradication projects:

- Canada thistle management in Anchorage;
- Spotted knapweed eradication in Anchorage, Kenai, Kasilof, Kake, Prince of Wales, Ketchikan, Valdez, Haines and Skagway;
- Purple loosestrife replacement in Anchorage; and
- Giant Hogweed Eradication in Kake.

Industry Coordination

The Coordinator has worked with a number of industry groups and private sector companies on a range of invasive weeds and pest issues, including:

- horticulture industry to find solutions to identified problem species and vectors
- gravel producers through the Alaska Rock Products Association and Alaska Miners Association to develop a weed free gravel certification program
- agricultural producers and Soil and Water Conservation Districts to further the Weed Free Forage Certification Program by keeping records and organizing trainings for forage certifiers
- Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association (AWRTA) to incorporate invasive species prevention and detection measures in their "Adventure Green" certification program
- pest control operators to develop presentations about state invasive weeds and agricultural pest management priorities at the pesticide applicator recertification class, 2009 and 2010

Agency Coordination

The Coordinator regularly works with state, federal, and local government employees to organize management of invasive weeds and agricultural pests. Examples of interagency coordination include:

- Participating in the Alaska Committee for Noxious and Invasive Plants Management (CNIPM) by organizing the annual conference, coordinating multiagency weed management efforts, and participating in subcommittees
- Participating in the Alaska Invasive Species Working Group (AISWG) meetings, and presently leading an effort to further formalize the group by establishing bylaws and an advisory board
- Being identified as lead in coordinating response to potential Spartina infestations
- Working with Alaska DOT, providing presentations at the annual Environmental Expo in 2009 and encouraging their involvement in local weed management projects around the state
- Furthering coordination with federal agencies through participation in several committees including the Alaska Pest Risk Assessment Committee, Weed Free Gravel Committee, Weed Free Forage Committee, and others.
- Coordinating early detection border inspections for state priority weeds with U.S. Customs and Borders Protection staff
- Assisting in annual Integrated Pest Management trainings for the Cooperative Extension Service
- Participating in the Alaska Coastal Management Plan working group

Local Coordination Efforts

The coordinator participates and facilitates local efforts to manage invasive weeds and agricultural pests by connecting organizations with similar efforts, focusing priorities, and providing assistance when necessary. Key examples of local coordination efforts include:

- Attended Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) meetings around the state in person and by teleconference
- Helped to coordinate local response for Garlic Mustard and Spotted Knapweed eradication
- Coordinates with Soil and Water Conservation Districts attending local and statewide meetings
- Assisted AACD in hiring their invasive plants coordinator
- Assisted the Anchorage CWMA in developing a strategic plan for invasive plant management
- Participated in coordinating response to a newly discovered Elodea canadensis infestation in the Chena Slough in Fairbanks

Coordination with Canada and Other States

The Division of Ag has participated in coordination with the Yukon, British Columbia and Northwest Territories in Canada to share information and encourage management of high priority invasive weeds that threaten to spread to Alaska. Coordination with other states is done through participation in the Western Weed Coordinator Committee.

Comments on Agency Projects

The state coordinator has provided comments to federal agencies seeking to manage invasive weeds on federal lands to ensure state invasive weed management priorities are addressed and management is done with effective and safe methods. Comments to agencies have included:

- USDA 2009 priorities
- National Park Service Environmental Analysis for invasive plants management
- BLM scoping Environmental Analysis for weed management on the Dalton Highway
- USFWS Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge Environmental Analysis for invasive plant management

Comments were submitted on state projects and programs as well. Several DOT road construction projects have been commented on to include invasive plant management and prevention measures, often by request from DOT. The coordinator commented to DF&G that the scope of invasive species

issues eligible for funding from the Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund be broadened from just pike to any invasive species with impacts to salmon.

Technical Assistance

Individuals and groups working on weed and pest management around the state are often dealing with these issues for the first time. The coordinator has worked to provide advice on controlling infestations in effective, economical, and safe ways. Examples of technical assistance provided include:

- Provided numerous recommendations for weed management and prevention at DOT's request
- Participated in the review committee for Alaska Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) Invasive Plant Program Grants
- Participated in ranking the invasiveness of invasive plants
- Provided guidance to Chugach State Park staff seeking to initiate invasive plant management
- Reviewed species included in a grass identification field guide and freshwater plants identification field guide
- Provided firsthand knowledge to USGS when modeling the spread of invasive plants in Alaska
- Reviewed strategic plan for Spartina prevention and management developed by NOAA
- Worked to develop protocol for an inventory of invasive weeds along the Trans Alaska Pipeline
- Provided assistance in project development to AACD Invasive Plant Program Coordinators
- Working with the Alaska Shorezone Committee who models habitat for invasive plants

Public Outreach and Presentations

Many people in Alaska are unfamiliar with the impacts invasive weeds and agricultural pests pose Alaska. The Coordinator works to provide information to the public to generate awareness and increase participation in prevention, detection, and management. Recent examples of public events which the Coordinator presented or participated in include:

- Mat- Su Salmon Science Symposium 2008 and 2009
- Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Kenai CWMA workshops
- Alaska Forum on the Environment 2009, 2010, and scheduled for 2011
- Alaska Citizen Scientist Teachers Workshop in 2010
- Lead tour of weeds on Chester Creek greenbelt in Anchorage
- Invasive plants impacts to salmon and moose, the Eagle River Nature Center, September 2010
- Alaska Wilderness Recreation and Tourism Association annual conference, 2009
- Alaska Greenhouse and Nursery Conference, 2009

Grant Writing

The coordinator has worked to secure additional funds and grants from partnering agencies and other sources to assist the state in meeting its weed and pest management goals. Examples of such grants include:

- USFWS ARRA project grant to eradicate spotted knapweed (awarded \$100,000)
- USFS Forest Health Protection grant for coordination with horticultural industry (awarded \$80,000)
- USFS Forest Health Protection grant for management of Canada thistle in Anchorage (awarded \$8,000)
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant for management of Canada thistle in Anchorage (awarded \$80,000 but returned because matching funds were not appropriated)
- BLM grant for gravel pit inventory and initiation of a weed-free gravel certification program (awarded \$20,000)



Alaska Association of Conservation Districts

1700 E Bogard Rd Ste 203A

Wasilla, Alaska 99654

CONSERVATION • DEVELOPMENT • SELF – GOVERNMENT

Natural Resources Committee
State Capitol, Room 124
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

February 15, 2011

Subject: Letter of Support for HB 97

Dear Committee members:

The Alaska Association of Conservation Districts (AACD) recommends continued funding for the Division of Agriculture's invasive weed and agricultural pest program and supports passage of HB 97. Since signing the original bill into law (HB 330), the Division of Agriculture has undertaken an unprecedented and much appreciated role in collaboration and management of high-priority invasive weeds in Alaska.

Invasive weeds are a serious threat economically and ecologically in Alaska. Their presence increases the cost of agricultural production and can negatively impact wildlife habitat. While the majority of land in Alaska is void of non-native species, invasive weeds have become common along our roadways and are moving into natural ecosystems. AACD knows that working collaboratively, while invasive are establishing, is the most cost-effective approach to manage invasive weeds in Alaska.

The Division of Agriculture's invasive weeds and agricultural pest management program is leading several invasive weed management projects across Alaska that are well respected by AACD. A crucial invasive plant project being implemented by the Division of Agriculture involves working statewide to eradicate spotted knapweed. This highly invasive plant costs the state of Montana an estimated \$42 million annually due to degradation of agricultural lands. The Division of Agriculture has been aggressively working to eradicate the 23 known infestations of spotted knapweed in Alaska, and as far as we can tell, only 7 small infestations remain.

AACD appreciates Division of Agriculture's efforts in working with private businesses to find solutions towards invasive plant management problems. For instance, Division of Agriculture is leading an effort to create a voluntary gravel pit certification program, which would be modeled after the current Alaskan weed free straw/hay program.

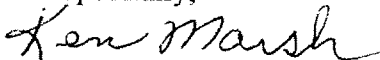
Pg. 2

Letter of Support, HB 97

Materials in some private owned gravel pits are infested with invasive weeds and seeds. Using these contaminated materials can result in moving invasive weeds into construction sites that then spread into sensitive fish and wildlife habitats. Voluntary participants without select invasive plants would have a value added product that could be used in private or public projects that seek to use weed-free materials. To ensure the industry is an active participant, Division of Agriculture has given presentations on this voluntary program to the Rock Products Association and the Alaska Miners Association.

AACD feels strongly that the Division of Agriculture's invasive weed and agricultural pest program has helped increase the efficiency and efficacy of invasive plant management statewide and would endorse this program becoming permanent. As statutes originating from HB 330 will sunset in the spring of 2011, AACD recommends the passage of HB 97.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ken Marsh".

Ken Marsh

President

Alaska Association of Conservation Districts



Alaska Committee for Noxious and Invasive Plants Management

January 31st, 2011

Alaska House Representatives
House Resources Committee
State Capitol, Room 124
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Subject: letter in support of HB 97

Dear House Resource Representatives:

Compared to the lower 48, Alaska has far fewer non-native invasive plant species. With swift and strategic management of our invasive weeds, Alaska has a rare opportunity to avoid severe economic and ecological impacts that have occurred in other parts of the country.

The Alaska Committee for Noxious and Invasive Plants Management (CNIPM) appreciates the excellent work that has resulted from AS 03.05.027, which pertains to Division of Agriculture's invasive weed and agricultural pest program. Since signing this statute into law, the Division of Agriculture has undertaken a significant role in collaboration and management of high-priority invasive plant species in Alaska. Unfortunately, AS 03.05.027 will sunset in the spring of 2011. CNIPM supports continued funding of AS 03.05.027 and recommends the the passage of HB 97.

CNIPM is composed of concerned citizens, scientists, and land managers that volunteer or work for non-profit, tribal, local, state, and federal agencies across Alaska. The goals of CNIPM are to heighten the awareness of problems associated with invasive plant species and to bring about greater statewide coordination, cooperation, and action to halt the introduction and spread of these undesirable plants. To learn more about the mission and goals of CNIPM, please visit www.uaf.edu/ces/cnipm.

Without continued funding of AS 03.05.027, CNIPM believes regular review of regulations and the strategic plan generated from this statute will cease and quickly become outdated. When signing AS 03.05.027 into law, the state recognized that pre-existing invasive plant regulations were outdated and ineffective and that the creation of a strategic plan with updated regulations would increase efficacy of invasive plant management in Alaska. As the type and abundance of invasive weeds are constantly changing in Alaska, the state should regularly review both documents. Consistent review will increase the likelihood of the state pursuing the most urgent and meaningful management priorities for invasive plant species in Alaska.

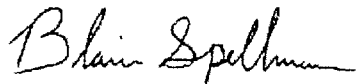
CNIPM greatly appreciates the new level of cooperation and coordination from the state government, which we feel is a direct result of AS 03.05.027. In years past, CNIPM had minimal contact with the DNR, likely a result of state employees having a full load of job duties.

AS 03.05.027 created a dedicated invasive plant management position within the Division of Agriculture. As a result, CNIPM now has a DNR contact that regularly attends monthly teleconferences and collaborates on education and management projects.

CNIPM is particularly pleased with Division of Agriculture leading projects that involve private industries and state-wide management efforts of notorious invasive plant species. First, Division of Agriculture is leading a CNIPM subcommittee geared towards the creation of a weed free gravel certification program. Second, Division of Agriculture is working with the horticulture industry to find solutions to state-wide invasive plant issues. Finally, Division of Agriculture is leading efforts in the state-wide eradication of spotted knapweed, giant hogweed, and regional management of Canada thistle, all of which have a serious potential to impact economies in Alaska.

While much work remains, CNIPM believes that AS 03.05.027 has resulted in Division of Agriculture making valuable contributions to invasive plant problems across Alaska. In particular, CNIPM feels AS 03.05.027 has directly improved invasive plant species regulations and strategic planning, DNR coordination with CNIPM, collaboration with private industries in the pursuit of solutions to invasive plant problems, and management of notorious invasive weeds. To continue and progress on the great work accomplished by Division of Agriculture, CNIPM urges for continued funding of AS 03.05.027 and supports passage of HB 97.

Sincerely,



Blaine T. Spellman
Chair, CNIPM Board of Directors
(907)354-1227
blainespellman@gmail.com



Alaska Committee for Noxious and Invasive Plants Management

December 3rd, 2010

State of Alaska
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 11001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001
3rd Floor State Capital

Subject: continue funding for AS 03.05.027 and remove sunset clause

Dear Governor Parnell:

Compared to the lower 48, Alaska has far fewer non-native invasive plant species. With swift and strategic management of our invasive weeds, Alaska has a rare opportunity to avoid severe economic and ecological impacts that have occurred in other parts of the country.

The Alaska Committee for Noxious and Invasive Plants Management (CNIPM) appreciates the excellent work that has resulted from AS 03.05.027, which pertains to Division of Agriculture's invasive weed and agricultural pest program. Since signing this statute into law, the Division of Agriculture has undertaken a significant role in collaboration and management of high-priority invasive plant species in Alaska. Unfortunately, AS 03.05.027 will sunset in the spring of 2011. CNIPM supports continued funding of AS 03.05.027 and recommends the removal of its sunset clause.

CNIPM is composed of concerned citizens, scientists, and land managers that volunteer or work for non-profit, tribal, local, state, and federal agencies across Alaska. The goals of CNIPM are to heighten the awareness of problems associated with invasive plant species and to bring about greater statewide coordination, cooperation, and action to halt the introduction and spread of these undesirable plants. To learn more about the mission and goals of CNIPM, please visit www.uaf.edu/ces/cnipm.

Without continued funding of AS 03.05.027, CNIPM believes regular review of regulations and the strategic plan generated from this statute will cease and quickly become outdated. When signing AS 03.05.027 into law, the state recognized that pre-existing invasive plant regulations were outdated and ineffective and that the creation of a strategic plan with updated regulations would increase efficacy of invasive plant management in Alaska. As the type and abundance of invasive weeds are constantly changing in Alaska, the state should regularly review both documents. Consistent review will increase the likelihood of the state pursuing the most urgent and meaningful management priorities for invasive plant species in Alaska.

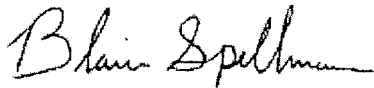
CNIPM greatly appreciates the new level of cooperation and coordination from the state government, which we feel is a direct result of AS 03.05.027. In years past, CNIPM had

minimal contact with the DNR, likely a result of state employees having a full load of job duties. AS 03.05.027 created a dedicated invasive plant management position within the Division of Agriculture. As a result, CNIPM now has a DNR contact that regularly attends monthly teleconferences and collaborates on education and management projects.

CNIPM is particularly pleased with Division of Agriculture leading projects that involve private industries and state-wide management efforts of notorious invasive plant species. First, Division of Agriculture is leading a CNIPM subcommittee geared towards the creation of a weed free gravel certification program. Second, Division of Agriculture is working with the horticulture industry to find solutions to state-wide invasive plant issues. Finally, Division of Agriculture is leading efforts in the state-wide eradication of spotted knapweed, giant hogweed, and regional management of Canada thistle, all of which have a serious potential to impact economies in Alaska.

While much work remains, CNIPM believes that AS 03.05.027 has resulted in Division of Agriculture making valuable contributions to invasive plant problems across Alaska. In particular, CNIPM feels AS 03.05.027 has directly improved invasive plant species regulations and strategic planning, DNR coordination with CNIPM, collaboration with private industries in the pursuit of solutions to invasive plant problems, and management of notorious invasive weeds. To continue and progress on the great work accomplished by Division of Agriculture, CNIPM urges for continued funding of AS 03.05.027.

Sincerely,



Blaine T. Spellman
Chair, CNIPM Board of Directors
(907)354-1227
blainespellman@gmail.com



Alaska SeaLife Center
w i n d o w s t o t h e s e a

December 1, 2010

The Honorable Sean Parnell
P.O. box 110001
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Governor Parnell:

Re: AS 03.05.027: Noxious weed, invasive plant and agricultural pest management and education

Globally, invasive plants, agricultural pests and other species of invasive organisms impact ecosystems, ecosystem services, and economies that in the United States alone result in over \$130 billion in losses and associated management costs each year. Alaska lags other states in coordinating prevention, monitoring, mitigation and education to reduce the threats and impacts of invasives, but Alaska does have some programs of value in our efforts to confront this growing problem. One such program is instituted under AS 03.05.027: Noxious weed, invasive plant and agricultural pest management and education. However, this Statute includes Sec. 2. Repealing the Act; and Sec. 3. setting an effective date for the repeal as June 30, 2011.

We would like to ask you to consider the impacts repeal of this Act will have on Alaska's ability to address both the threat and the realities of invasive plants and agricultural pests in Alaska. As the Director of Conservation for the Alaska SeaLife Center and having charge over our marine invasive species program, I engage various Federal and State staff in invasive species planning and action and with industry and communities on initiatives to reduce the many threats posed by introduction of non native species. It will be a great loss to the State in managing invasive plants and our coordinating activities if AS 03.05.027 sunsets. We would therefore respectfully request your intervention to repeal Sec. 3. of this Act and assure a sustaining budget is approved to uphold the very important objectives, staffing and actions so necessary under the Statute.

I will be pleased to speak with you or anyone else who can help make a difference in building the State capacity to address the growing problem of invasive species that impact and threaten our State and its ecosystems and economies.

Sincerely,

Howard Ferren
Director of Conservation
907.224.6396
howard_ferren@alaskasealife.org

Linda Hay

From: Louie Flora
Sent: Friday, March 04, 2011 11:50 AM
To: Jeanne Ostnes; Linda Hay; House Resources
Subject: FW: concerned citizen - letter of support - HB97

From: blaine spellman [<mailto:blainespellman@gmail.com>]
Sent: Friday, March 04, 2011 11:49 AM
To: Louie Flora
Subject: concerned citizen - letter of support - HB97

Hello Louie,

Below is a another letter of support for HB 97. Lori Zaumseil, co-author of letter, is planning on testifying before the House Resource Committee.

Warm regards,

Blaine

----- Forwarded message -----

We are Troy and Lori Zaumseil and are writing to request that you support the passage of HB97 which will allow the Division of Ag to retain the statewide coordinator position, addressing noxious weeds and invasive plants. The bill is set to be heard in the House Resources Committee on Monday and move forward from there. Alaska is at such a critical place in preventing/managing the economic and ecological impact from invasive threats and maintaining the continuity of efforts is imperative.

Troy and I became involved in this issue several years ago when we found a Canada Thistle growing in a plant we purchased at a local box store. This extremely noxious and invasive plant was covered by Alaska statute (albeit a very old and outdated one), and yet when we tried to make a report to the Division of Agriculture, we were disturbed to find that they had neither staff nor funding to follow up on this serious situation. That began a journey for us as concerned citizens, property owners, gardeners, outdoors people and voters. After contacting the legislative body, we also began speaking-- first to community councils then to state conventions (Alaska Forum on the Environment, CNIPM, Master Gardeners, etc) and eventually we were invited to address the opening session of the National Invasive Weeds Awareness Week in Washington D.C. to talk about Alaska's fight to protect valuable resources from invasion. During that first year, HB330 was introduced by Rep Craig Johnson and later passed unanimously by the Alaska Legislature in a demonstration of how the system CAN work for ordinary citizens who ask their representatives to protect their interests and then those elected officials take action. Troy and I have spoken about our involvement and pride in our Alaska system in presentations we have given all over Alaska and Outside, not only in D.C., but in Nevada, Oregon and Florida as well. We were asked by US Fish and Wildlife Service to speak in Allakaket, Bettles and Coldfoot this past summer and were able to educate residents of interior Alaska on the threats to their way of life posed by invasive species. Without an organized statewide program, Alaska will not be eligible for federal funding and the individual efforts of state and federal agency staffers will be far less effective. We ask you, once again, to protect the citizens you serve by voting for HB97 and allowing this work to continue uninterrupted. Prevention and Early detection are the most economical and efficient method to address the problem. Delay or disruption would certainly result in higher cost to the state's taxpayers.

In addition, we are asking that you request action be taken by the State Department of Transportation. Travel corridors are the proven vector for invasive species to move through and into an area, and Alaska is extremely vulnerable to this scenario. It is imperative that DOT take positive action to PREVENT the spread of invasives and no longer be the passive conduit to ALLOW the spread. Roadways all over the state have noxious plants growing in the right of ways and airports also have infestations, and all of these are allowing noxious weeds to be spread into pristine areas that are defenseless

when these seeds and plant parts are transported through or onto them. The Department needs to be given a mandate to address this issue so that their budget allocations can be made accordingly. The DEC approval process to treat noxious weeds is so cumbersome as to be nearly ineffective and needs to be streamlined to allow effective and efficient treatment. While Troy and I are not versed in the workings of state bureaucracy, we are confident that those in receipt of this e-mail will be able to take the necessary steps to bring DOT and DEC into step with assisting in the problem and not adding to it.

Thank you so much for your time and attention

Lori and Troy Zaumseil
9015 Dewberry St
Anchorage, AK 99502
907-602-3604

--

Blaine T. Spellman, Invasive Plant Program Coordinator
Alaska Association of Conservation Districts
901 S. Koyukuk Dr. Ste. 193A
Fairbanks, AK 99775
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(907)474-6251 (fax)
blainespellman@gmail.com