

From: Imlorijean@aol.com [mailto:Imlorijean@aol.com]
Sent: Friday, March 04, 2011 11:26 AM
To: sean.parnell@alaska.gov; mead.treadwell@alaska.gov
Cc: Sen. Lyman Hoffman
Subject: Regarding HB97

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 This extremely noxious and invasive plant was covered by Alaska statute (albeit a very old and outdated one), and yet when we tried to make a report to the Division of Agriculture, we were disturbed to find that they had neither staff nor funding to follow up on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