



Memorandum

July 20, 2006

TO: The Honorable Mark Steven Kirk

FROM: Geoffrey S. Becker
Specialist in Agricultural Policy
Resources, Science, and Industry Division

SUBJECT: Emerald Ash Borer

Pursuant to your request, the following is information on the emerald ash borer. Sources include various materials prepared by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the Illinois Department of Agriculture; some are attached. Please call me at 7-7287 if I can be of further assistance.

Overview

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is a small, metallic-green beetle native to Asia. Its larvae burrow into the bark of ash trees, causing the trees to starve and eventually die within 1 to 3 years. The borer typically moves only short distances by flying but is believed to be spread more widely by movement of ash nursery stock, logs, branches, and firewood. EAB was first identified in the Detroit metropolitan area in July 2002. It may have first entered Michigan from China 10 or more years ago, most likely in solid wood packing materials or dunnage used to transport manufactured goods. Ten to twenty million ash trees have died or are dying due to EAB, according to plant health experts.

The beetle does not pose any direct risk to public health and appears to affect only ash trees. However, this tree is important ecologically and economically; a preliminary USDA analysis indicates that the EAB has the potential to kill 23 million ash trees over the next 25 years with removal and replacement costs of more than \$7 billion. USDA asserts that failure to contain the EAB could result in losses to North American urban and rural forests not seen since the fungal diseases Chestnut Blight and Dutch Elm Disease of the last century.

Eradication/Control

The primary method of EAB eradication is to remove and dispose of infected trees, and all ash trees within one-half mile of detection sites. Research has indicated that insecticide treatments may provide protection for uninfected ash trees but may or may not save infected ones.

APHIS has lead responsibility for protecting U.S. plant resources from destructive pests and diseases, including the EAB. Once the EAB is detected, APHIS works cooperatively with the U.S. Forest Service and with state and local authorities, to determine its extent and eradicate it. In Illinois, the State Department of Agriculture is the cooperating agency. More specifically, response plans include: extensive surveys around confirmed sites to determine the extent of the problem; establishment of quarantines which restrict the movement from the affected area of all host material or "regulated articles" — the EAB itself; all types of hardwood firewood; and "nursery stock, green lumber, and other material living, dead, cut, or fallen, including logs, stumps, roots, branches, and composted chips" from ash trees;¹ monitoring of regulated businesses such as firewood dealers and nurseries; the complete removal and disposal of all infested trees and debris; and public education and outreach on EAB activities.²

Status

In mid-June 2006, the Illinois Department of Agriculture announced that it had found an EAB in the yard of a Kane County home east of Lily Lake. Subsequently, a number of infested trees were found in the same ("The Windings") subdivision and in an adjacent subdivision to the north. Inspectors said they suspect that the beetle may have been transported into Illinois in contaminated firewood from a quarantined area in Michigan. The Department on July 13, 2006, reported a second Illinois infestation, in the Village of Wilmette. An initial survey found suspect trees in approximately a five-block area with as many as 16 trees exhibiting symptoms of EAB infestation. Since it was discovered in 2002 in the Detroit area, the EAB also has been found in parts of Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and Maryland, which also have had detection and eradication plans executed.

Funding

Federal funding for survey and eradication efforts comes through the APHIS pest and disease management program, as one of the "emerging plant pests" activities. For FY2006, Congress has earmarked a total of \$10 million for the EAB.³ (States and localities contribute additional sums.) The Administration has requested a substantial increase for FY2007, for a total of \$31.2 million to fight the EAB, including complete tree removal at approximately two dozen sites. The report to accompany the House-passed version of the FY2007 money bill (H.Rept. 109-463; H.R. 5384) designates a total of \$20 million for the EAB. The House report further notes that the Department in April 2006 had already designated \$7.5 million more for EAB from its Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) account (generally used by USDA for farm commodity price support operations but also for emergency purposes). The report (S. Rept. 109-266) to accompany the Senate-reported version provides \$16.3 million, of which \$1.5 million is specifically for Illinois. Like the House, the Senate report directs USDA to use CCC funds to supplement its EAB program appropriation. Floor action on the Senate bill is pending.

¹ APHIS's EAB regulations are at 7 C.F.R. §301.53. APHIS regulatory authority is derived from the federal Plant Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 7701 *et seq.*).

² Illinois and other states where EAB is a concern have response plans. The Illinois plan is at [<http://www.agr.state.il.us/Environment/Pest/emeraldashborer.pdf>].

³ H.Rpt. 109-255, the conference report to accompany H.R. 2744, USDA's FY2006 appropriation.