



General Assembly
State of Colorado
Denver

January 29, 2014

Sally Jewell, Secretary of Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Tom Vilsac, Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

RE: Improving federal and state cooperation to control noxious weeds on federal lands

Dear Secretary Jewell and Secretary Vilsac:

We, the undersigned members of the Joint Senate Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Energy Committee and the House Agriculture, Livestock, and Natural Resources Committee, request your respective agencies to increase cooperation with Colorado state government to control noxious weeds on federal lands. Noxious weeds in Colorado reduce agricultural productivity, diminish wildlife habitat, impair water quality, and increase the likelihood of wildfire. The state of Colorado has developed and maintains an integrated noxious weed management program that provides expertise and other resources to local entities to address noxious weeds on public and private lands across the state.

Thirty-five percent of Colorado's land area (over 23 million acres) is managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Interior. While progress has been made to establish and sustain a statewide, comprehensive response to noxious weed invasions, the relationship between the federal agencies and the state must be strengthened and expanded. Comprehensive noxious weed management in Colorado would be strengthened considerably if your agencies would:

- recognize that one of the greatest threats to native plant communities in the West comes from invasive plants. We encourage you and your land management agencies to look seriously at your funding priorities and adjust them accordingly to preserve and maintain this fundamental resource;
- work in concert with state and local entities on priority noxious weed species that are identified by the state. Colorado has prioritized these plants according to their distribution and behavior, and a coordinated effort - across jurisdictional boundaries - is required to ensure effective control efforts;

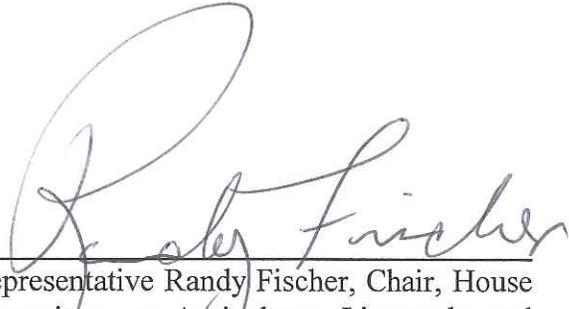
- use an integrated pest management approach to actively manage noxious weeds; and
- coordinate the sharing of weed mapping data with the Colorado Department of Agriculture via county weed programs. We appreciate the U.S. Forest Service in Colorado for directing its local managers to contribute data. However, the participation by all agencies - state and federal - in the sharing of mapping data will be required to give weed managers an accurate picture of the task before them and to provide the tools to measure the progress being made.

We stand in agreement with the Western Governors' Association Policy 13-02, which urges the creation and expansion of multi-agency partnerships to prevent the spread of new invasive species, and the creation of programs that result in more on-the-ground prevention, management and eradication. A critical element of this partnership must include adequate federal resources, including adequate staffing and funding.

Sincerely,

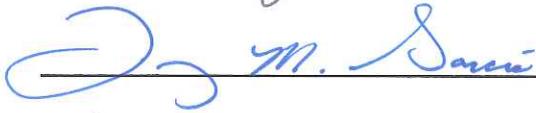


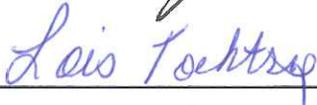
Senator Gail Schwartz, Chair, Senate
Committee on Agriculture, Natural Resources
and Energy

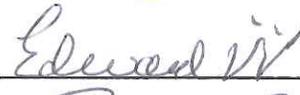


Representative Randy Fischer, Chair, House
Committee on Agriculture, Livestock, and
Natural Resources

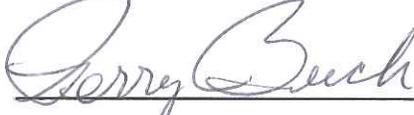


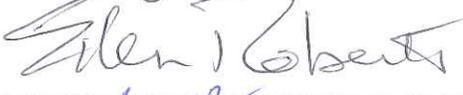






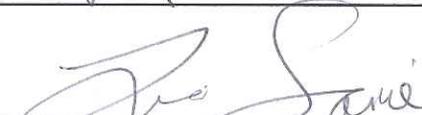


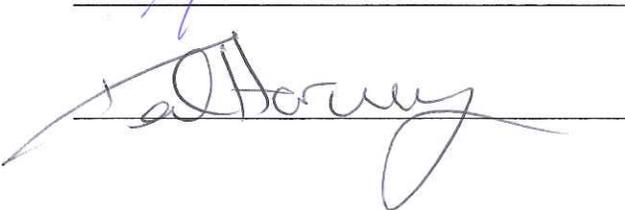


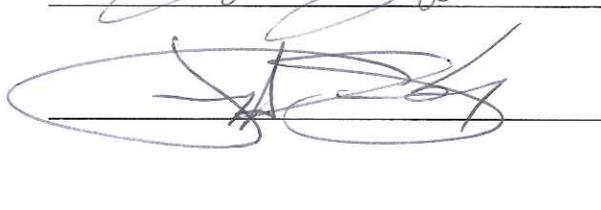






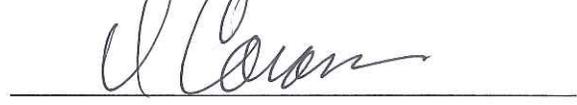


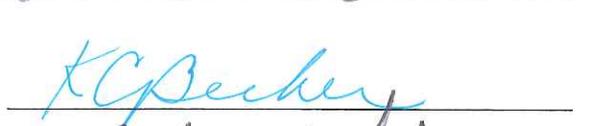
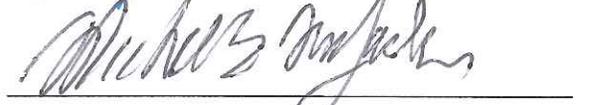




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- c: Daniel Jirón, Regional Forester, Rocky Mountain Region, US Forest Service
John Mehlhoff, Acting State Director, Colorado Office, US Bureau of Land Management
Noreen Walsh, Regional Director, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Mountain-Prairie Region
Sue Masica, Intermountain Region Regional Director, US Parks Service