

NASF RESOLUTION Number 2007-3

ORIGIN OF RESOLUTION:

Northeastern Area Association of State Foresters

ISSUE OF CONCERN:

A national policy for providing standard certification that effectively addresses all pests at risk for movement on firewood.

BACKGROUND:

Firewood is a host for numerous destructive forest insects and diseases, including emerald ash borer, Asian longhorn beetle, gypsy moth, Sirex woodwasp, oak wilt, beech bark disease, pitch canker, and others. Human transport of firewood has the capacity to vastly extend the range and spread of these pests and diseases. Human transport across state lines has been identified as one of the most likely reasons for a number of isolated outbreaks involving many of these pests and diseases.

The firewood industry is largely unregulated, with little or no national regulatory guidelines outside of pest-specific quarantine areas and states. While USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has a host of regulations that control firewood as a vector for specific organisms (Asian longhorn beetle, 7 CFR 301.51-2(a); emerald ash borer, 7 CFR 301.53-2(a); oak wilt, 7 CFR 301.92-2(a)(1); gypsy moth, 7 CFR 319.77-2(g); pine shoot beetle, 7 CFR 301.50-2(a); European larch canker, 7 CFR 301.91-2(a)), there is no standardized certification process for firewood that covers all pests and diseases.

This lack of federal regulation has led many states to seek or pass their own firewood certification regulations for specific pests. Most recently, Pennsylvania banned the import of out-of-state firewood generally due to the absence of a federal ban. While APHIS has instituted a number of local and statewide quarantines and firewood certifications for specific pests and diseases, there has not been any move to provide regulation or certification for firewood in general. In many cases these state and federal quarantines do not effectively prevent the spread of infested firewood, since the quarantines are usually in reaction to an outbreak or occurrence that has been undiscovered for several years.

The combined effect of all of the various pest-specific quarantines and certifications, whether state or federal, has resulted in both confusion for the general firewood-using public and market uncertainty for larger interstate firewood transporters.

RESOLUTION:

USDA is encouraged to move expeditiously to provide a standardized treatment and certification procedure for the interstate movement of all firewood for the purpose of controlling the spread of destructive forest pests and diseases. USDA should work closely with state forestry agencies, state departments of agriculture, and other relevant state entities in the development and coordination of any procedures.

Furthermore, USDA should develop, in cooperation with NASF and other affected interests, a national educational and outreach program with a clear national message that is consistent and uniform across state lines. The goal of the program is to inform interstate tourists and travelers that firewood has the potential to introduce dangerous and damaging plant pests and as such should not be carried for long distances.

Copies of this resolution will be sent to the Secretary of Agriculture; Administrator of USDA-APHIS; Chief of the USDA Forest Service; National Plant Board; Eastern, Central, Southern, and Western Plant Boards; and The Nature Conservancy.

NASF ACTION:

Approved

DATE OF ACTION:

September 19, 2007