
September 17, 2019

Karen Ross
President
Western Association of State Departments of Agriculture
1220 N Street, Suite 400
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Ms. Ross:

I am writing to commend the Western Association of State Departments of Agriculture (WASDA) on its recent completion and approval of the Western Weed Action Plan (WWAP). This plan is the product of a multi-year, multi-state effort to develop a blueprint for actions to address invasive plants in the sagebrush biome. The plan provides a framework to confront the effects of these invading species and addresses issues such as funding, policy and regulation, coordination and cooperation, data sharing, and research and reporting.

Invasive weeds such as cheatgrass, medusahead, fountain grass, and ventenata pose a major threat to western rangelands by increasing the risk of wildfire, outcompeting native grasses, and diminishing soil and water quality. Federal, state and local agencies should view invasive annual grasses as a regional threat and strive to identify and implement cross-boundary projects to control them at a regional level.

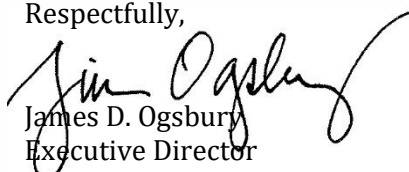
In July 2018, the Western Governors' Association (WGA) launched the Western Governors' *Biosecurity and Invasive Species Initiative*. This effort has focused on the effects of nuisance species, pests and pathogens on ecosystems, forests, rangelands, watersheds and infrastructure in the West, and examined the role that biosecurity plays in addressing these risks. Recommendations of the initiative are contained in the Western Governors' Biosecurity and Invasive Species Special Report, published in July 2019. The effort also informed gubernatorial adoption of WGA Policy Resolution [2019-06, Biosecurity and Invasive Species Management](#), which articulates the Governors' policies on these urgent issues.

WGA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) have executed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) to establish a framework for collaboration on various challenges facing western landscapes. Under the MOU, WGA and USDA will take actions to meaningfully address the large-scale infestation of cheatgrass and other invasive annual grasses on forests and rangelands in the West. WGA is forming a working group to identify best practices, new technologies, and innovative management techniques to reduce the spread of invasive annual grasses to western forests and rangelands.

I invite WASDA to work with WGA as it implements this element of the MOU. The effort would benefit from the expertise of western departments of agriculture, as well as the substantial body of work contained within the WWAP.

Please contact me if you have any questions or require further information. In the meantime, with warm regards and best wishes, I am

Respectfully,



James D. Ogsbury
Executive Director