



Agenda Date: 4/25/2006
Agenda Placement: 10B

NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Letter

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Britt Ferguson for Nancy Watt - County Executive Officer
County Executive Office
REPORT BY: Andrew Carey, Management Analyst, 253-4477
SUBJECT: Consideration of AB 2479 - noxious and invasive weed legislation, AB 2297 - high risk pest exclusion legislation, and HR 4049 - early pest detection and surveillance legislation

RECOMMENDATION

Approval of and authorization for the Chair to sign a letter of support for each of the following bills:

1. AB 2479, Noxious and Invasive Weeds (state legislation);
2. AB 2297, High Risk Pest Exclusion (state legislation); and
3. HR 4049, Early Pest Detection and Surveillance Improvement Act (federal legislation).

(Unanimous vote of the Board members present required for each bill)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following three bills related to noxious and invasive weed management and pest detection and exclusion have been reviewed by the County's Legislative Subcommittee and forwarded to the Board of Supervisors with a recommendation that the County send a letter of support for each bill:

AB 2479, Noxious and Invasive Weeds;
AB 2297, High Risk Pest Exclusion; and
HR 4049, Early Pest Detection and Surveillance Improvement Act.

AB 2479 and AB 2297 are both currently in the Assembly Agricultural Committee in the State Legislature and scheduled for a hearing on April 26th. HR 4049 is a federal bill, which is currently before the Agricultural Committee in the House of Representatives.

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact? No

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action is not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

The following three bills related to noxious and invasive weed management and pest detection and exclusion have been reviewed by the County's Legislative Subcommittee and forwarded to the Board of Supervisors with a recommendation that the County send a letter of support for each bill:

1. AB 2479, Noxious and Invasive Weeds;
2. AB 2297, High Risk Pest Exclusion; and
3. HR 4049, Early Pest Detection and Surveillance Improvement Act.

AB 2479, Noxious and Invasive Weeds, which is currently in the Assembly Agricultural Committee in the State Legislature, is scheduled for a hearing on April 26th. Existing law provides that within the Department of Food and Agriculture Fund there is the Noxious Weed Management Account, with 85% of the funds in this account being made available to eligible Weed Management Areas (WMA) or county agricultural commissioners for the control and abatement of noxious weeds. Under current law, only 5% of the funds in the account shall be made available to the Department of Food and Agriculture for carrying out provisions relating to management of noxious and invasive weeds. This bill would increase the percentage of Noxious Weed Management Account funds that shall be made available to the Department of Food and Agriculture to 10%.

This bill would also appropriate \$2,500,000 annually from the State of California's General Fund to be deposited into the Noxious Weed Management Account. In previous years, funds for this program have not been appropriated; therefore the inclusion of the \$2,500,000 appropriation in AB 2479 is considered a positive development from a weed management perspective. The County's 2006 Legislative Platform includes a provision for supporting "federal and state legislation that would provide additional funding for WMAs for the control of harmful non-native weed pests." Should AB 2479 be enacted, Napa County's recently formed WMA would be eligible for funds from this program.

AB 2297, High Risk Pest Exclusion, which is currently in the Assembly Agricultural Committee in the State Legislature, is scheduled for a hearing on April 26th. This bill provides increased funding (from the current annual amount of \$5.5 million to \$16 million annually) for California's Pest Exclusion Program which is implemented by county Agricultural Commissioners. This program provides much needed funding and local assistance to county Agriculture Departments for inspections of incoming plant and animal shipments for the presence of invasive species; and consequently helps prevent the introduction of such pests and the subsequent economic and environmental damage that would be caused by their introduction.

The County's 2006 Legislative Platform does not expressly address additional funding for high risk pest exclusion programs. However, support for AB 2297 is consistent with the County's 2005 Legislative Platform, which stated that, "High Risk Pest Exclusion Programs are very important to agriculture in Napa and other counties" and called for supporting "legislative proposals that provide resources for the State and counties to perform high risk pest exclusion activities."

HR 4049, Early Pest Detection and Surveillance Improvement Act, is a federal bill, which is currently before the Agriculture Committee in the House of Representatives. This bill would authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into cooperative agreements with state and local governments, subject to the availability of appropriated funds, to augment their efforts to conduct early detection and surveillance to prevent the establishment or spread of plant pests that endanger agriculture, the environment, and the economy of the United States. HR 4049 is consistent with the County's 2006 Legislative Platform concerning supporting "legislative proposals that provide resources for the State and counties to perform early pest detection and surveillance activities."

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- A . AB 2479 letter of support
- B . AB 2297 letter of support
- C . HR 4049 letter of support

CEO Recommendation: Approve

Reviewed By: Andrew Carey