

Committee on Resources,

Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation, & Public Lands

[parks](#) - - Rep. Joel Hefley, Chairman

U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515-6207 - - (202) 226-7736

Witness Statement

June 15, 2001

The Honorable Joel Hefley, Chair
National Parks, Recreation and Public Lands Subcommittee of the House Resources Committee
1333 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Comments on H.R. 1462, The Harmful Nonnative Weed Control Act of 2001

Dear Chairman Hefley,

I am writing on behalf of the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) and our regional affiliate societies to support H.R. 1462, the Harmful Nonnative Weed Control Act of 2001. This bill begins to address a major concern of over 4000 members who apply science to promote effective, economical and environmentally sound weed management. Our expertise is used in many environments including natural areas, public and private lands, forestland, cropland, rangeland, aquatic and riparian areas as well as road, rail and utility right of ways throughout the country. In addition to our strong support for this bill we have several suggestions to help integrate this bill with other important ongoing, public and private, local, state and federal efforts.

Increases in ongoing weed management efforts on federal lands should accompany this bill.

For years federal land management agencies have been asked to do more to control the severe weed problems that are degrading public lands and infesting adjacent land. Commendable efforts such as FICMNEW (Federal Interagency Committee for Management of Noxious and Exotic Weeds), the Pulling Together Initiative and the National Park Service's new prototype Exotic Plant Management Teams are now making long awaited progress. However, current funding for weed management on federal lands is still inadequate. It is not even keeping pace with new infestations, much less existing problems. It is important that this bill not siphon funds away from ongoing weed management programs nor preclude future increases in the weed management budgets of federal agencies.

Because weed problems exceed available funding it is important to prioritize management for the greatest gains. An example of prioritization is the Montana Weed Management Plan that united federal, state, tribal, local, public and private concerns to develop a cohesive assessment and prioritized plan for the entire state. The state now has a comprehensive picture of the problem and a sensible roadmap for the future. They know how much is currently spent, how much needs to be spent and where the next available dollar can be most effective. Because such plans provide

significant benefits the legislation should encourage state and local recipients to prepare management plans of their own design prior to receiving second and subsequent year funding. The Pulling Together Initiative currently has such a requirement for its competitive grants.

We also recommend the legislation specifically allow state and local weed management entities to use funds authorized by this legislation for applied research when new management techniques are needed. Applied research is sometimes needed to learn how to manage new weed problems, especially ones that are only found in small local areas. An example is Chinese clematis, a new weed problem confined to a three county area in Colorado. Inexpensive research that solves problems for local weed management groups can keep small problems such as Chinese clematis from becoming big problems later.

In closing we strongly support this bill that will help overcome some of the financial barriers that impede weed management. We hope that it will function as part of cohesive and comprehensive efforts to improve weed management on all types of public and private lands and waters. Because weeds spread across all types of boundaries our efforts to manage them must also work in unison across these boundaries.

We appreciate this opportunity to provide comments and welcome any questions they may have raised.

Sincerely,

Robert R. Hedberg
Director of Science Policy
National and Regional Weed Science Societies

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