cdfa CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD & AGRICULTURE
Karen Ross, Secretary

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AUG 28 2014
INYO CO. CLERK
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BY DEPUTY

August 25, 2014

Re: Notice of Availability of a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report Regarding the Proposed Statewide Plant Pest Prevention and Management Program

To Interested Parties:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), is making available a draft program environmental impact report (PEIR) for public review. CDFA has prepared this PEIR to provide the public, responsible agencies, and trustee agencies with information about the potential environmental effects of the proposed Statewide Plant Pest Prevention and Management Program (Proposed Program). This PEIR was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970 (as amended) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR] title 14, section (§) 15000 et seq.). CDFA hereby invites comments on the adequacy and completeness of the environmental analyses in the PEIR.

PROGRAM LOCATION: Plant pests and pathogens are found in a combination of urban, rural, natural and agricultural settings in the state, and therefore, Statewide Program activities would occur in a variety of locations throughout California. The potential geographic extent of a pest infestation depends on a variety of factors, including suitable climatic and ecological conditions for the pest and its hosts. Accordingly, Statewide Program activities may occur anywhere that a pest or pathogen is (or may be) found in agricultural or nursery settings (in cooperation with commercial growers), in residential communities, at border protection stations, and sometimes outside California (for activities conducted by others besides CDFA, in response to restrictions on importation of potentially infested commodities and equipment from outside the state). Proposed Program activities are conducted based on specific management decision criteria, including whether a pest population has been detected, whether the size and density of that pest population exceeds an identified threshold, the related severity of the threat to agriculture, and other factors. The location, area, and extent of specific activities under the Statewide Program ultimately depend on the targeted pest, the type of program, and the management approaches available.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: The Statewide Program encompasses a range of prevention, management and regulatory activities, carried out or overseen by CDFA against specific injurious pests and pathogens, and their vectors, throughout California. The Statewide Program is made up of a variety of focused programs, each including a set of options for controlling target pests or pathogens. Activities conducted under the Statewide Program include: pest rating (evaluation of pest's environmental, agricultural and biological significance); identification, detection and delimitation of new pest populations; pest management response, which may include rapid eradication and/or control of new and existing pest populations, and prevention of the movement of plant pests into and within California. The Statewide Program includes a set of options to achieve CDFA's goals and objectives, including physical, biological, and chemical management techniques.

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The Statewide Program is ongoing and currently is implemented pursuant to existing CEQA authorizations. This PEIR is intended to provide CEQA compliance for the future Statewide Program activities. CDFA will use the PEIR in deciding whether to approve, approve with modifications, or deny the Proposed Program. The PEIR is intended to comply with CEQA requirements for reasonably foreseeable pest prevention and management activities, and to update compliance requirements for existing pest prevention and management programs as needed. The Proposed Program does not attempt to capture all potential future Statewide Program activities, only those that are reasonably foreseeable based on existing information regarding the status of specific pests and management approaches.

This PEIR also updates and integrates the various physical, biological, and chemical management activities into a comprehensive program, and provides a consolidated set of updated management practices (MPs) and mitigation measures using the most current technology and scientific information. If CDFA approves the Proposed Program, these MPs and mitigation measures will replace those identified in prior CEQA documents and will serve as a comprehensive management framework for Proposed Program activities.

Finally, the PEIR will be used for subsequent CEQA evaluation, for both project-level pest prevention and management activities and program-level compliance for newly developed management approaches or other program activities, such as newly identified types or species of plant pests. Use of the PEIR to facilitate CEQA compliance for individual activities and program components will enable CDFA to respond consistently with its goals of rapid response and minimizing risk to human health and environmental resources. A Tiering Strategy has been developed for this purpose and is included in the Draft PEIR.

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY: The PEIR and supporting documents are available for download from the CDFA's website: http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/plant/peir/. Hard copies of the document can be reviewed at CDFA's offices in Sacramento (address shown below). To arrange to view documents at CDFA's offices during business hours, call (916) 403-6881. The document can also be reviewed electronically at libraries throughout the state that serve as document repositories; for a full list of locations, refer to the Statewide Program website. CDs are available on request by phoning (510) 986-1852 or emailing PEIR.info@cdfa.ca.gov. They will also be available at the public meetings in San Diego, Los Angeles, Tulare, Sacramento and Napa. Printed copies are also available at cost plus postage, upon request using the above contact information.

PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD: The PEIR is available for a 45-day public review and comment period, which begins on August 25, 2014 and ends at 5 p.m. on October 8, 2014. **Please send comments on the PEIR at the earliest possible date, but postmarked no later than 5 p.m. on October 8, 2014 in order for your comments to be considered.**

Comments may be mailed to the following address:

California Department of Food and Agriculture
ATTN: Laura Petro, Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisory)
Statewide Program Draft PEIR Comments
1220 N Street, Suite 221
Sacramento, CA 95814

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Written comments may also be submitted by email to: PEIR.info@cdfa.ca.gov. Emailed comments are preferred, and should include your name, address, and daytime telephone number so a representative of CDFA can contact you if clarifications regarding your comments are required.

All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the official public record. A Final PEIR will be prepared which will include responses to comments received during the public review period.

PUBLIC MEETINGS: All interested persons are encouraged to attend the public meetings to present written and/or verbal comments on the PEIR. Five public meetings will be held at the following locations and times:

- San Diego, CA: Monday, September 22, 2014 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the San Diego County Farm Bureau (1670 E. Valley Parkway, Escondido, CA 92027)
- Los Angeles, CA: Tuesday, September 23, 2014 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Huntington Library (1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA 91108)
- Tulare, CA: Wednesday, September 24, 2014 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner's Office (4427 S. Laspina, Tulare, CA 93274)
- Sacramento, CA: Monday, September 29, 2014 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the California Department of Food and Agriculture (1220 N Street, Auditorium, Sacramento, CA 95814)
- Napa, CA: Tuesday, September 30, 2014 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Napa County Agricultural Commissioner's Office (1710 Soscol Avenue, Napa, CA 94559)

Sincerely,

Michele Dias
General Counsel, CDFA

Locations where PEIR can be reviewed:

- Online: http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/plant/peir/
- California Department of Food and Agriculture, 1220 N Street, Sacramento, CA, 95814 (by prior arrangement during normal business hours – call (916) 403-6881
- Libraries throughout the state; see PEIR website (http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/plant/peir/) for a list of locations

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