



A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

Board of Supervisors

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Belia Ramos
Chair

September 5, 2023

The Honorable Mike Thompson
Napa District Office
2721 Napa Valley Corporate Drive
Napa, CA 94588

RE: Federal Support to Address the Threat Posed by the Mediterranean Oak Borer

Dear Congressman Thompson:

I am writing to request your support in addressing the threat posed by the Mediterranean Oak Borer (*Xyleborus monographus*) to our precious oak ecosystems. As an advocate for environmental preservation, especially as it relates to our incredible valley, I need your help addressing the impact of an invasive species like Mediterranean Oak Borer (MOB), that can wreak havoc on our native flora.

Mediterranean Oak Borer, an invasive ambrosia beetle, is a serious pest of several native oak species; to date, it has been found in Valley oak, (*Quercus lobata*), Black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*) and Blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*), and its presence has been confirmed in four California Counties, including Napa, Sonoma, Lake, and Sacramento. In its native range, including Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, it attacks a wide range of hosts including 12 species of oak.

The Mediterranean Oak Borer presents a significant ecological and economic threat, capable of causing extensive damage to oak trees across Napa County and other locations throughout California. With the potential to devastate oak populations, this invasive pest could disrupt entire ecosystems, effecting not only the biodiversity of our natural landscapes but also the many ecosystem services that oaks provide, such as habitat for wildlife, carbon sequestration and erosion control. In urban park and roadside settings, dead or dying trees with fragile limbs, pose a threat to public safety and can add to wildfire fuel loads.

The extent of Mediterranean Oak Borer throughout California is currently unknown. Extensive support is necessary to understand the biology, determine its spread, and identify an effective means of management. Funding support for research and mitigation efforts is crucial to developing effective strategies to manage and contain the spread of the Mediterranean Oak Borer. Funding could support the following short-term, mid-term and long-term essential activities:

1. **Detection and Response:** With funding, we can implement protocols for detecting and reporting the presence of the Mediterranean Oak Borer early, which is instrumental in preventing further spread and containing its current range. Through detection, we can track its movement, assess the extent of its impact, and identify vulnerable areas. Quick response to new infestations is essential to prevent the pest's spread.
2. **Outreach and Education:** Public Awareness is pivotal in the fight against invasive species. The

funding will enable educational campaigns to inform communities, landowners, and stakeholders, about the threat of Mediterranean Oak Borer, its potential consequences, and how to detect and report its presence, and prevent further unintentional spread.

3. **Research:** Comprehensive research is necessary to better understand the biology, behavior, and lifecycle of Mediterranean Oak Borer as well as the fungus associated with the beetle galleries inside of infested trees.
4. **Development of Control Strategies:** Researchers and experts can utilize funding to explore various control strategies that minimize the impact of the Mediterranean Oak Borer. This might include incorporating biological controls, assessing chemical control options, as well as implementation of cultural control practices that discourage the pests proliferation.
5. **Funding for Management and Removal:** With funding we can remove and dispose of trees that may act as amplifiers (source of beetle dispersal to neighboring trees) and identify an appropriate and effective tool for eliminating infested material and pest populations. Dead limbs and dying trees on private and public property may pose a safety hazard that necessitates funding for removal and proper disposal.

Given the collaborative nature of environmental conservation, the success of these efforts requires support from various stakeholders including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and concerned citizens. I whole heartedly endorse and solicit federal support to address the threat posed by the Mediterranean Oak Borer. The resources provided through any future funding and general support will undoubtedly contribute to the protection and preservation of our cherished oak ecosystems.

Thank you for your time and commitment to safeguarding our environment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Belia Ramos". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Belia Ramos
Napa County Board of Supervisors
District 5