



WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

Dave Freudenthal
Governor of Wyoming
Chairman

Jon M. Huntsman, Jr.
Governor of Utah
Vice Chairman

Pam O. Inmann
Executive Director

Headquarters:
1600 Broadway
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

303-623-9378
Fax 303-534-7309

Washington, D.C. Office:
400 N. Capitol Street, N.W.
Suite 388
Washington, D.C. 20001

202-624-5402
Fax 202-624-7707

www.westgov.org

April 15, 2008

Robert W. Johnson, Commissioner
Bureau of Reclamation, Department of Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240-0001

Dear Commissioner Johnson,

I am writing you on behalf of the Western Governors' Association to respectfully urge your support for full funding of the Salt Cedar and Russian Olive Control Demonstration Act of 2006 (PL109-320) in Fiscal Year 2009 (FY09). This bill, which was signed into law on October 11, 2006, requires the Department of the Interior, in partnership with the Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Geological Survey, and Army Corps of Engineers, to assess the extent of salt cedar (tamarisk) and Russian olive infestations in the western United States and carry out demonstration projects to control and manage the infestations.

The rapid spread of salt cedar and Russian olive populations across western states is posing a growing threat to riparian ecosystems, watersheds, and water supplies. We support the parallel purpose of the Act to re-establish and restore native vegetation so that wildlife habitat, stream bank protection, and other riparian values are maintained and we recognize, in certain instances, salt cedar can be important habitat for federally listed species and migratory birds. In most instances, however, these non-native trees choke out native vegetation, narrow and channelize river beds, disrupt fisheries and wildlife habitat, increase the dangers from wildfire and floods, and deplete scarce water resources. Studies estimate that millions of acre-feet of water are lost to tamarisk annually.

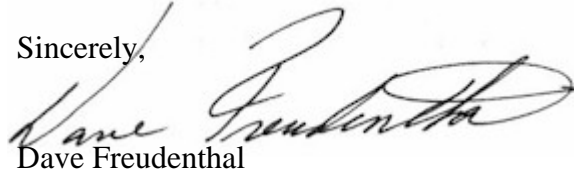
In Policy Resolution 05-11, "Undesirable, Invasive Aquatic Riparian Species," Western Governors identify salt cedar and Russian olive infestations as having significant negative impacts on the economic, social, and ecological health of the region and pledge to work jointly with federal and local partners to address the problem. We share the view that the salt cedar and Russian olive infestation is a problem that crosses local, state, and federal jurisdictions and requires the commitment of governments at all levels.

States such as Wyoming, Colorado, and Nebraska have already begun control efforts on these invasive trees along many of their shared watersheds. Similar projects are underway through-out the western states.

Robert W. Johnson
April 15, 2008
Page 2

Funding provided under the Salt Cedar and Russian Olive Control Demonstration Act would provide the unifying mechanism for the success of these programs. We therefore respectfully urge your support of fully funding the Salt Cedar and Russian Olive Control Demonstration Act of 2006 at \$15 million for FY09.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Freudenthal", is written over a light gray circular background.

Dave Freudenthal
Governor of Wyoming
Chairman, Western Governors' Association

Attachment

F:\Invasives\Salt Cedar and Russian Olive.doc