



February 7, 2022

Dear Legislators,

The members of the Minnesota Invasive Species Advisory Council (MISAC) would like to express our support for dedicated funding for County Agricultural Inspectors in each of Minnesota's 87 counties, which is reflected in H.F. 2147, as referred to the House Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee. We believe the Minnesota Legislature should include this funding as part of the final biennial budget.

County Agricultural Inspectors (CAIs) and local weed inspectors enforce Minnesota's Noxious Weed Law and perform critical tasks to help the state manage noxious and invasive weeds including weeds like Palmer amaranth. CAIs coordinate invasive species detection, management, and enforcement efforts with townships and municipalities, conduct investigations into invasive weed complaints and verify reports of noxious weed infestations, serve as the primary point of contact for noxious weed issues in the county, and typically serve as the lead contact for weed biological control programs.

Historically, counties and municipalities were given the responsibility to enforce the Noxious Weed Law as an unfunded mandate. As an unfunded mandate, it can be challenging for municipalities to fund invasive weed management activities, resulting in increasing infestations of noxious weeds. Dedicated funding to support CAIs would allow counties and municipalities to develop noxious weed management programs at the local level and begin implementing public education and prevention programs that are proactive instead of reactive, protecting Minnesota's resources from noxious weeds and invasive plants.

Minnesota's diverse ecological and agricultural landscapes benefit from the work CAIs do, and MISAC strongly supports funding for their roles. Thank you for your consideration of this important funding.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dane Huinker', is positioned above the printed name and title.

Dane Huinker
MISAC Treasurer

Minnesota Invasive Species Advisory Council (MISAC) member organizations (as of 2020):

- 1854 Treaty Authority
- Carver County Water Management Organization
- Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Lake County Soil & Water Conservation District
- Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe
- Hennepin County Public Works
- Meeker County
- Metropolitan Mosquito Control District (MMCD)
- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
- Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC)
- Minnesota Association of County Agricultural Inspectors
- Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)
- Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA)
- Minnesota Department of Transportation (MN DOT)
- Minnesota Invasive Terrestrial Plants and Pests Center (MITPPC)
- Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association (MNLA)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- St. Croix River Association
- The Nature Conservancy
- Three Rivers Park District (TRPD)
- University of Minnesota
- University of Minnesota Sea Grant Program
- U.S. Department of Agriculture – Animal Plant Health Inspection Service – Plant Protection and Quarantine (APHIS-PPQ)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture – National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
- Wildlife Forever