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June 7, 2007

Dear Secretaries, Commissioners and Directors,

I want to take this opportunity to encourage you to send your state plant regulatory official to the annual National Plant Board (NPB) meeting.

This year it is the Western Plant Board's responsibility to host the NPB Annual Meeting. The state of Hawaii stepped forward and graciously volunteered to undertake this task. This meeting will be held in Honolulu, Hawaii on August 19-23, 2007. I have attached a copy of the draft agenda, and other meeting details are available on our website at [www.nationalplantboard.org](http://www.nationalplantboard.org)

The value and need to attend this meeting should not be discounted because of the location. Please don't penalize NPB representatives or the state of Hawaii because it is known as a great vacation destination. The travel costs to attend the meeting in Hawaii are similar to costs to attend locations on the West Coast, and the hotel room rate is also comparable to rates at hotels large enough to hold this meeting elsewhere.

As you know this annual meeting provides our only opportunity to meet nationally to discuss and develop recommendations on critical plant pest management and trade issues. Information is provided on current national pest issues that have or could have domestic and North American quarantine implications. Canadian and Mexican Government Officials and NAPPO representatives participate each year as well. This year's theme is invasive species and Hawaii is the perfect location with its past and present invasive issues. Invasive challenges such as sirenix, plum pox, citrus diseases, EAB and sudden oak death will all be covered. Additionally, biotechnology issues and concerns are a critical part of the agenda. The Thursday session is very significant in that it provides a question and answer format to discuss current issues with knowledgeable federal officials, including APHIS-PPQ program and executive staff, as well as the Deputy Administrator.

The Annual Meeting always provides opportunities for face to face meetings between states and/or with federal officials to deal with state to state and state-federal issues. Impromptu meetings are common place at this meeting as are

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program specific committee meetings. I hope you will agree the National Plant Board is deeply involved in providing the technical solutions to some of our most critical invasive pest and trade challenges. NASDA and the NPB have been and remain full partners in protecting production agriculture and facilitating trade. Face to face participation by your NPB representation is critical if states such as yours are going to meet these challenges.

Thank you for your consideration and we hope to see your NPB representative at the NPB Annual Meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kenneth J. Rauscher".

Kenneth J. Rauscher, President  
National Plant Board