

Statement Regarding Organizational Support for Recommendations Developed by the National Firewood Task Force (NPB-2010-01)

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Background and Status

Firewood remains a critical pathway for moving many invasive forest pests such as the gypsy moth, emerald ash borer, and Asian longhorn beetle. While the USDA regulates the movement of firewood at international borders, there are increasing threats of movement across state lines. With the increasing threats of pest introduction, individual states have initiated regulations governing the movement of firewood across state borders. The National Plant Board and the National Association of State Foresters developed resolutions in 2009 requesting that USDA APHIS address the issue of the domestic movement of firewood as a pathway for spreading invasive plant pests. USDA, APHIS subsequently held listening sessions on this topic and formed the National Firewood Task Force (NFTF) in October 2009.

The NFTF developed recommendations focusing on three interdependent activity areas for managing the firewood pathway. These included outreach, voluntary and regulatory approaches. The recommendations were finalized in March 2010 and presented at regional plant board and association of state foresters meetings and other venues.

National Plant Board – Policy Statement

The National Plant Board fully supports the NFTF recommendations and encourages USDA, APHIS to immediately begin implementing the recommendations, including promulgating regulations for the interstate movement of firewood,

adopting an industry certification program, and policies encouraging campers to use local firewood. To facilitate this implementation, a steering committee needs to be appointed to provide oversight and monitor progress. To keep interested parties informed of progress, the NPB requests that USDA APHIS provide reports at the regional and national plant board and association of state foresters meetings and other appropriate venues.