



THE CENTRAL PLANT BOARD

Illinois · Indiana · Iowa · Kansas · Michigan
Minnesota · Missouri · Nebraska · North Dakota
Ohio · South Dakota · Wisconsin

July 25, 2016

Dr. Monica Lear, Director
Forest Health Protection
USDA Forest Service
201 14th St, SW, FHP 3CE
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Dr. Lear:

The member states of the Central Plant Board are among those many states with significant forest resources not yet infested by the gypsy moth, but they remain at great risk. The Central Plant Board has greatly appreciated the work of the Slow-The-Spread (STS) program, and recognizes that our vast oak/hickory forests have directly benefited from the success of the STS program. The STS program has a long history of successfully limiting the movement of the gypsy moth's leading edge towards the west and south. Spread has been limited by more than 70% from 13 miles a year (without STS) to 3 miles per year (with STS). The STS program has demonstrated a benefit to cost ratio of 3 to 1, and is one of the most successful plant pest management programs in our nation's history. Even though over 75 million acres of forest land has been defoliated by the gypsy moth since 1970, nearly 70% of the susceptible hardwood forests in the United States have not yet been infested by the gypsy moth and are still at great risk. Furthermore, it has the potential to impact nearly every state in the nation. Moreover, its primary host, *Quercus* spp., is one of the most economically important tree genera to our nation's forest products industry in terms of both domestic markets and international exports.

The STS program in previous years received as much as \$11 million in funding from the U.S. Forest Service. In recent years the funding had leveled out to about \$8 million annually but in 2016 it was reduced further to about \$7.5 million. If funding is not maintained at a minimum of \$8 million per year, the resulting accelerated advancement of the gypsy moth leading edge will cause significant economic and environmental impacts to the Central Plant Board states and beyond. Impacts go far beyond the economic, however. Many other impacts have been cited including, but not limited to: environmental losses (harm to water quality due to increased soil erosion, shifts in biodiversity, loss of an important mast species for wildlife, reducing ecosystem

function through habitat loss, changing food web dynamics, ground vegetation changes, ground level moisture may be lower and temperatures higher with reduced litter layer), human health impacts, and additional economic losses due to affected tourism industries and impacts to nursery and forest products industries from expanded quarantines.

The members of the Central Plant Board strongly urge the U.S. Forest Service to maintain its level of funding to the Gypsy Moth STS Program at a minimum of \$8 million annually, and to consider the program as one of its highest, long-term priorities.

Sincerely,



Julie Van Meter, President
Central Plant Board

CC:

Donald Duerr, USDA Forest Service

Robert Rabaglia, USDA Forest Service

Noel Schneeberger, USDA Forest Service

Donna Leonard, USDA Forest Service

Joe Collins, National Plant Board President

Larry Nichols, Southern Plant Board President, Gypsy Moth Slow The Spread
Foundation President

Dana Rhodes, Eastern Plant Board President

Brad White, Western Plant Board President