

National Environmental Coalition on Invasive Species

Environmental Defense Fund ♦ National Association of Invasive Plant Councils
Ecological Society of America ♦ Alliance for the Great Lakes ♦ The Wildlife Society
National Wildlife Federation ♦ American Bird Conservancy ♦ Natural Areas Association

28 May 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
522 Hart SOB
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
531 Hart SOB
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall,

The above-listed member organizations of the National Environmental Coalition on Invasive Species are writing to request Senate action on the Trump Administration's decision to dramatically reduce discretionary funding for the **National Invasive Species Council (NISC)** and its associated FACA Committee, the **Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC)**.

As members of the National Environmental Coalition on Invasive Species, we are focused on promoting scientifically sound policies that prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species in the United States. For the past several years, NISC has played a pivotal role in achieving these goals as the leader and coordinator of Administration-wide efforts to prevent, eradicate, and control invasive species.

However, NISC's funding through the Department of the Interior's Working Capital Fund has left it subject to one Department's discretion. **To protect the vital role NISC plays across the federal government, we request Senate adoption of new House report language directing DOI to provide at least \$1.2 million for NISC in FY 2020.**

Consisting of 12 federal Departments and four Executive Offices with staff and expertise housed in DOI, NISC has coordinated the nation's invasive species response since the enactment of Executive Order 13112 in 1999. Over the past several years, NISC has sought feedback from member departments and agencies to explore synergies and be responsive to needs across the Administration. This work has included the implementation of several Trump Administration priorities, such as pilot projects exploring the benefits of Early Detection and Rapid Response at the regional scale, evaluating the cost of invasive species on the nation's infrastructure, and guarding against the threat of invasive species in the Arctic.

Despite this success, DOI has decided to cut funding to NISC from \$1.2 million in FY 2019 to \$600,000 in FY 2020. In preparation of this, NISC employment has been reduced and nationally significant projects have been halted.

A 50 percent cut in funding would have long-lasting impacts on implementation of the nation's invasive species research priorities as laid out in NISC's [National Invasive Species Management Plan](#). The 2016-2018 plan, only partially completed, would suffer from a lack of staff and funding in attempts to get it across the finish line. Projects determined by federal agencies to be of high priority, including the creation of invasive species National Environmental Policy Act guidance and a national Early Detection and Rapid Response task force, would likely never be completed.

Any future attempts to update the NISC management plan would also prove difficult under proposed funding conditions. NISC has historically relied on the partnership and expertise provided by states, NGOs, and private interests that made up ISAC, whose operations were suspended this year due to funding constraints. **Without the input of ISAC, any invasive species strategy presented by the Administration risks being unrepresentative of the needs of the nation.**

Our organizations request the adoption of the House report language in support of adequate base-level funding for the National Invasive Species Council and the Invasive Species Advisory Committee. Please do not hesitate to contact any of the organizations below, or Caroline Murphy, manager of the NECIS Coalition (cmurphy@wildlife.org; 301-897-9770 x 308), at any time with questions regarding this request.

Sincerely,

Environmental Defense Fund

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