

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 19, 2003

The Honorable Joshua B. Bolten
Director
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, DC 20503

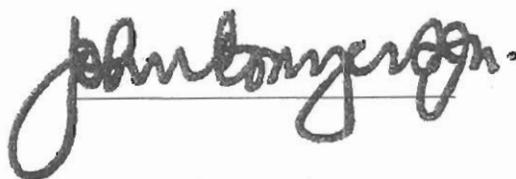
Dear Director Bolten:

We are writing to request your prompt support for a recent request for funds by USDA Secretary Veneman. This request asks for approximately \$42 million from the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) to combat the emerald ash borer (*agrilus planipennis*), a beetle that has devastated the Ash tree population in southeastern Michigan. We are concerned that delays in funding will hinder efforts to halt the spread of this invasive species that threatens the ash tree population throughout our nation. Current funding for combating this invasive pest will be expended shortly. Failure to provide additional funding in a timely manner, will lead to a needless cessation of these important efforts.

The emerald ash borer has already killed or damaged millions of ash trees in Southeast Michigan, and if the damage continues to spread, the results could be catastrophic. For the past year, the USDA has worked closely with the Michigan Department of Agriculture to halt the spread of the ash borer. Originally believed to only be in six southwest Michigan counties, the ash borer has more recently been detected in seven more counties. Should this spread continue unabated, nearly three percent of the nation's leaf cover could be threatened.

The prompt assistance of your office in the past was critical in providing needed monies as quickly as possible. Once again, we look forward to working with you to halt the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer. Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Bart Snyck
McKullum

Candice A. Miller

Agnes Smith
Oliver Arp

William A. McClinton
Wm. 1202

Vernon J. Ehlers

Oak E. Childers

Cordya C. Kipatrice