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STATE OF WASHINGTON

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

July 21, 2021

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Plant Protection and Quarantine
Plant Pest and Disease Management
and Disaster Prevention Program
Submitted via E-mail to Washington State Department of Agriculture only.

RE: Support for Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) Fiscal Year 22 Plant Protection Action Section 7721 Suggestion: *Continuing On-line Enforcement of WSDA Plant Health Quarantines*

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Washington Invasive Species Council, I am writing to express strong support for the Washington State Department of Agriculture, Plant Services Division, Plant Protection Program (Plant Services Program) Fiscal Year 2022 Plant Protection Act Section 7721 funding suggestion to protect Washington specialty crops through online enforcement of state plant health quarantines.

The State Legislature established the Washington Invasive Species Council in 2006 to develop and implement a strategic approach to prevent and control invasive species that threaten Washington's environment and economy. Preventing invasive species from being introduced to Washington is the most efficient and cost-effective approach to protecting the resources of our state. As such, the preventative approach of enforcing state quarantines with online retailers is the best approach. When prevention fails, invasive species are often unable to be eradicated or contained. Nationally, invasive species cost hundreds of millions in damages and losses annually.

The Plant Services Program has a proven track record of protecting Washington's agriculture and has been a national leader in addressing online sales of quarantined and prohibited goods. Agriculture is a cornerstone for Washington, being valued at $51 billion annually – or 13% of Washington's yearly economic activity. Investing in prevention and online quarantine enforcement will protect our agriculture with a substantial return on the relatively low investment when compared with annual costs for managing and eradicating a new pest to Washington's agriculture.

In summary, the Washington Invasive Species Council strongly supports your funding of this suggestion. Please contact me at justin.bush@rco.wa.gov or 360-902-3088 with any questions you may have regarding our support of this project.

Justin D. Bush
Washington Invasive Species Council Executive Coordinator