

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 30, 2017

The Honorable Ken Calvert  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Interior and Environment  
and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
B-308 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Interior and Environment  
and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1016 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

As you begin work on the fiscal year (FY) 2018 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we urge you to include language that instructs the Secretary of the Interior, in cooperation with the Secretary of Agriculture, to establish a pilot program that provides funding for combating tamarisk and ensures coordination amongst the various federal agencies, as well as consultation with state and local officials, tribes, and other organizations dedicated to controlling and eradicating tamarisk.

These two Secretaries are Co-Chairs of the National Invasive Species Council which was established “to ensure that federal programs and activities to prevent and control invasive species are coordinated, effective, and efficient.”

Tamarisk, an invasive species, continues to harm and occupy hundreds of thousands of acres throughout the country. Tamarisk squanders precious water resources, limits recreational opportunities, degrades wildlife habitats, and negatively impacts flood as well as wildfire mitigation efforts. These invasive plants can consume up to 200 gallons of water per day per plant. Invasive tamarisk continues to plague local communities already suffering from drought and abnormally dry conditions.

While the National Invasive Species Council estimates that more than \$2.2 billion is spent by the federal government each year combating invasive species, the current federal system is largely a hodgepodge of different grant programs, regulations and laws administered by multiple agencies that aren't effectively coordinating their efforts.

We need a “coordinated, effective and efficient” system in place to address the tamarisk issues

facing this country and to ensure we are not squandering precious water resources on invasive plants.

Accordingly, we ask that you include language similar to the following:

*The Secretary of the Interior, in cooperation with the Secretary of Agriculture, shall establish a pilot program that provides funding for eradicating tamarisk and ensures coordination amongst the various Federal agencies, tribes and local stakeholders. The pilot program shall--(1) be scientifically based and take a watershed approach; (2) include performance metrics to quantify and report to Congress on the amount of tamarisk removed each year; (3) be implemented for a period of seven consecutive fiscal years; (4) establish uniform policies and procedures to ensure that each executive agency shares information about tamarisk eradication grants awarded by the agency, both within the agency and among other appropriate executive agencies that might be awarding similar Federal grants, and that such information is publically available and published on a single Government-controlled Internet website; and (5) emphasize the importance of collaboration with local stakeholders and allow for meaningful and timely identification of high priority areas by State and local officials, Indian tribes, and other organizations dedicated to controlling and eradicating tamarisk.*

The requests in this letter are consistent with recommendations from a recently released Department of the Interior (DOI) report entitled *Safeguarding America's Lands and Waters from Invasive Species: A National Framework for Early Detection and Rapid Response*. According to DOI, "The report contains a series of concrete recommendations for federal action that builds on existing initiatives and calls for the implementation of... Advancing pilot projects targeted for high priority areas; scaling partnerships across government and with private, non-profit, and scientific communities."

We thank you for your consideration of this request, and for your leadership on the committee.

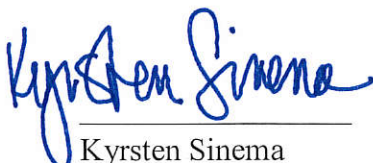
Sincerely,



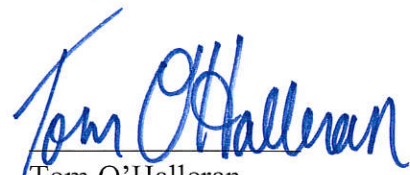
Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



David Schweikert  
Member of Congress



Kyrsten Sinema  
Member of Congress



Tom O'Halleran  
Member of Congress