

# California Legislature

Assemblymember Richard Bloom, Chair  
Assembly Budget Subcommittee 3  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 2003  
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: Budget Request for Asian Citrus Psyllid Prevention Program

Dear Assembly Member Bloom:

We are writing you to request your support for an ongoing appropriation of \$10 million from the State General Fund to the California Department of Food and Agriculture's Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Program (Program) to help prevent the spread of the invasive insect Asian citrus psyllid (ACP) and Huanglongbing (HLB), a deadly and incurable plant disease that threatens the state's residential citrus trees and commercial citrus industry.

Citrus growers have invested over \$100 million since 2009 to help stop HLB from destroying our state's commercial citrus industry and the millions of citrus trees that decorate our urban and residential landscapes.

The industry raises approximately \$15-18 million per year through a mandatory assessment that was created by AB 281 (De Leon, 2009). In 2017 and 2018 the State Legislature recognized the seriousness of this issue and approved one-time expenditures of \$10 million to enhance ACP and HLB detection, suppression and eradication activities throughout the state. The Program also receives \$12.5 million per year in federal funding.

Over 90% of the total Program budget, approximately \$40 million per year, is directed to urban, non-agricultural areas for suppression and eradication efforts such as: biological control, trapping, survey, CDFA lab diagnostics, quarantine enforcement, and public outreach.

Unfortunately, according to CDFA, the area affected by ACP and HLB has increased substantially in recent years. The number of square miles under quarantine for ACP has grown to nearly 90,000 and encompasses 29 counties. Most recently, ACP was discovered in the cities of Sacramento and San Francisco.

Most concerning is the alarming rate at which HLB is spreading in the Los Angeles Basin. Since 2012, over 1,200 HLB infected trees have been identified and removed from backyards in 25 cities in Los Angeles, Orange, and Riverside Counties. In 2018, HLB was detected in 699 trees, a 160% increase over the previous year. So far this year 280 infected trees have been removed.

The industry, CDFA, and researchers agree that the number one reason HLB has not yet been found in commercial citrus groves is because of the significant investment made by the growers, the federal government, and the state in urban areas where ACP and HLB are most prolific.

Citrus growers remain committed to the fight to stop HLB. In addition to the activities in the urban areas, some growers pay as much as \$200 per acre to protect their citrus groves. Additionally, the industry has invested heavily in research in hopes of finding a solution to HLB. Recently, the industry self-funded the construction of an \$8 million state-of-the-art biosecurity research facility near UC Riverside that will attract prominent scientists from around the world to study HLB.

Until a solution is found, we must continue working together to protect our citrus trees from HLB. For these reasons, we respectfully request your support of the CDFA Citrus Pest and Disease Prevention Program and allocate \$10 million of ongoing general funds to save California's citrus industry and the millions of residential citrus trees.

Sincerely,



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JACQUI IRWIN

Assemblymember, 44<sup>th</sup> District



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MONIQUE LIMÓN

Assemblymember, 37<sup>th</sup> District