

## ANALYSIS

### Item 64: Oregon Department of Agriculture Emerald Ash Borer Response

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**Analyst:** April McDonald

**Request:** Allocate \$550,000 from the Emergency Fund and approve the establishment of one limited duration position (0.33 FTE) for initial response to the detection of the Emerald Ash Borer in Oregon.

**Analysis:** According to U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) beetle is an invasive and destructive wood-boring pest which has destroyed tens of millions of ash trees throughout the U.S. and Canada. Larvae feed on the soft wood beneath the bark of a tree, carving s-shaped galleries, which eventually girdle and kill the tree without visible damage. This unseen damage can lead to multiple years of infestation before detection. The beetle is native to Asia, however, today it has been detected in 36 states, including Oregon. On June 30, 2022, it was discovered in Forest Grove, Oregon infesting both green ash and Oregon ash trees. This is the first detection of EAB on the west coast.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) requests allocation of \$550,000 from the Emergency Fund to support emergency survey, education and management efforts associated with EAB response. ODA aims to begin evaluating the level of infestation using a “slow the spread” approach to prevent migration outside of the known infested area within the city limits of Forest Grove.

If approved, the requested allocation will fund immediate needs for survey, treatment, green waste collection, and outreach. ODA plans to support efforts across partners and utilize any federal funding opportunities available. The Department intends to use four existing seasonal staff for surveys and an existing seasonal Outreach Coordinator. Additionally, ODA requests establishment of one limited duration Natural Resource Specialist 3 (0.33 FTE) to serve as the EAB Coordinator. The allocation, if approved, would support the following expenses:

- \$320,000 for staffing costs
- \$50,000 for contracts with arborists for tree felling
- \$120,000 for contracts for securing a local collection area for cut green waste of ash material
- \$60,000 for treatment of select trees within the immediate area to prevent infestation

This funding is intended to support the initial and immediate need on behalf of Oregon’s EAB response. The Department may seek additional resources during the December 2022 meeting of the Emergency Board.

**Recommendation:** The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the Emergency Board allocate \$550,000 General Fund from the Emergency Fund to the Oregon Department of Agriculture and authorize the establishment of one limited duration position (0.33 FTE) for initial response to the detection of the Emerald Ash Borer in Oregon during the 2021-23 biennium.

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Oregon Department of Agriculture  
Crawford

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**Request:** Allocate \$550,000 from the State Emergency Fund for Emerald ash borer (EAB) response and establishment of one limited duration Natural Resources Specialist 3 position (0.33 FTE).

**Recommendation:** Approve the request.

**Discussion:** The EAB is an insect native to Asia, which arrived accidentally in the United States likely through contaminated shipping materials. First identified in Michigan in 2002, EAB was identified in thousands of ash trees. Spread occurred first in the Midwest and has continued to many parts of the United States. After an ash tree has been impacted by EABs, the tree often dies within four years.

Prior to this year, Oregon has taken steps to prepare for a potential arrival. The Oregon Department of Agriculture has surveyed nurseries bringing in a high volume of material from out of state and secured federal funding to develop a proactive strategy to protect Oregon ash against EAB prior to detection.

On June 30, 2022, EABs were discovered in Oregon and is the first detection on the West Coast. Funds will be used to resource the efforts of EAB response and slow the spread of the EAB. The primary goal is to prevent movement of the EAB outside of the known infested area, which as of August 2022, is located within Forest Grove city limits.

**Legal Reference:** Allocation of \$550,000 from the State Emergency Fund to supplement the appropriation made by chapter 600, section 1(3), Oregon Laws 2021, for the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources, for the 2021-23 biennium.



**OREGON  
DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE**

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August 22, 2022

Senator Peter Courtney, Co-Chair  
Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair  
Joint Emergency Board  
900 Court Street NE  
H-178 State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs:

**Nature of the Request**

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) requests permission to appear before the September meeting of the Emergency Board to request funding for the Emerald ash borer (EAB) response effort in Oregon.

The detection of Emerald ash borer beetle in Oregon requires emergency survey, education, and management work to begin evaluating the level of infestation and respond to immediate needs. The EAB response is a multilateral effort between federal, state, local, and district partners to conduct surveys and management efforts of infected trees. ODA's request is intended to fund the efforts of the EAB response across the partners and utilize any federal funding opportunities. Due to the nature of EAB, ODA's approach is 'slow the spread' – to prevent movement outside the known infested area, which as of August 2022, is within the city limits of Forest Grove in Washington County.

ODA is requesting \$550,000 General Fund to support the following primary needs for action: survey, treatment, green waste collection, and outreach. The requested funds will allow ODA to utilize four existing seasonal staff (Laborers) for surveys, an existing seasonal Outreach Coordinator (Natural Resource Specialist 1), and requests to establish one limited duration EAB Coordinator (Natural Resource Spec 3, 0.33 FTE). Personal Services estimate is \$260,073 and \$59,927 for associated Services and Supplies. Contracts will be needed with arborists for tree felling (\$50,000) and for securing a local collection area for cut green waste of ash material (\$120,000). To date, EAB has not been detected more than 1 mile from the initially infested location, meaning that treatments of select trees within the immediate Forest Grove area may be a viable option to prevent infestation (\$60,000).

The funding request is the initial request in September and ODA, on behalf of the EAB response, may have additional resource needs for the December 2022 meeting of the Emergency Board.

### **Agency Action/Background**

Oregon has taken measures to prepare for the arrival of EAB. Using USDA-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) funds, the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) conducted statewide surveys from 2013-2015 with no positive detections. Aside from surveys, ODF was active with Oregon State University (OSU) extension in the Oregon Forest Pest Detector (OFPD) program. Between 2015-2021, over 500 natural resource professionals (foresters, arborists, landscape contractors, park workers, etc.) have been trained through the program on recognizing the signs and symptoms of EAB. The program has an online reporting tool for graduates to submit suspected EABs and other invasive species. No positive reports were submitted by OFPD graduates.

Between 2019-2021, ODA surveyed nurseries within the Willamette Valley that were identified as high-risk due to the volume of material brought in from out of state. These surveys also included inspection of surrounding landscape trees. In collaboration with US Forest Service, ODF has been actively collecting seeds of ash from around the state, with the goal of preserving the gene pool in the event of the arrival of EAB. The collected seeds could be used to reintroduce Oregon ash in replanting efforts.

In 2021, ODA secured federal funding to develop a proactive biocontrol strategy for protection of Oregon ash against EAB prior to its detection in Oregon. It is critical to determine if the introduced biocontrol agents (parasitoids) can succeed in suppressing EAB infesting ash in the unique Oregon environment. As of July 2022, ODA began sourcing Oregon ash, and partnered with University of Delaware to test the effect of Oregon ash on parasitoids. However, the discovery of EAB in Oregon has dramatically changed plans for 2023 and beyond. ODA has submitted a proposal to continue this funding into FY2023 with the intent of releasing biocontrol agents in select infested locations in Oregon. In 2018, ODA in partnership with ODF, City of Portland, Oregon State University, USDA-APHIS, and US Forest Service produced the EAB Readiness and Response Plan, which is the template that ODA and partners are using to generate immediate and future action plans.

### **Emerald ash borer (*Agilus planipennis*)**

Emerald ash borer (EAB) is a devastating invasive insect, introduced into the United States in the 1990s. On June 30<sup>th</sup> 2022, it was discovered in Forest Grove, Oregon infesting both green ash



and Oregon ash trees. This is the first detection of EAB on the west coast. EAB is known to feed on ash, white fringe tree, and olive trees. Since its introduction into Michigan it has devastated ash-dominated forests in 35 other states. EAB is estimated to have killed 17 million ash (*Fraxinus* spp) trees, and caused over \$25 billion in damage (Kovaks et al. 2009). Larvae feed on the phloem of the tree carving galleries into the phloem, which eventually girdles the tree without visible damage. This cryptic damage can lead to multiple years of infestation before detection. Oregon ash (*Fraxinus latifolia*) is the only species of ash (genus *Fraxinus*) native to the Pacific Northwest. Oregon ash is long-term dominant in riparian areas, areas prone to heavy flooding and areas too wet for other tree species to grow. It is not a commercially grown for timber, but is used for revegetating wet areas, riverbank stabilization, and is utilized by multiple endangered species within Oregon. Oregon ash is a culturally important species to indigenous communities across Oregon where it has historically been utilized for medicinal and ceremonial uses. Ash has long been a popular tree for planting in urban communities and EAB will have devastating effects to our urban forestry community.

#### **Action Requested**

The Department respectfully requests to come before the September meeting of the Emergency Board to request \$550,000 General Fund and establishment of one limited duration Natural Resource Specialist 3 position (0.33 FTE) for EAB response in the 2021-23 biennium. ODA anticipates a request for continuing the EAB response into the 2023-25 biennium.

#### **Legislation Affected**

Oregon Law 2021, Chapter 600, Section 1, Subsection (3)

Sincerely,



Alexis M. Taylor, Director  
Oregon Department of Agriculture

