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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 01–105–1]

Notice of Request for Extension of Approval of an Information Collection

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Extension of approval of an information collection; comment request.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's intention to request an extension of approval of an information collection in support of the gypsy moth program.

DATES: We invite you to comment on this docket. We will consider all comments we receive that are postmarked, delivered, or e-mailed by February 12, 2002.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by postal mail/commercial delivery or by e-mail. If you use postal mail/commercial delivery, please send four copies of your comment (an original and three copies) to: Docket No. 01–105–1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3C71, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737–1238. Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. 01–105–1. If you use e-mail, address your comment to regulations@aphis.usda.gov. Your comment must be contained in the body of your message; do not send attached files. Please include your name and address in your message and "Docket No. 01–105–1" on the subject line.

You may read any comments that we receive on this docket in our reading room. The reading room is located in room 1141 of the USDA South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC. Normal reading

room hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. To be sure someone is there to help you, please call (202) 690–2817 before coming.

APHIS documents published in the **Federal Register**, and related information, including the names of organizations and individuals who have commented on APHIS dockets, are available on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/rad/webrepor.html>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For information on the gypsy moth identification worksheet, contact Mr. Jonathan Jones, Operations Officer, Invasive Species and Pest Management, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 134, Riverdale, MD 20737–1236; (301) 734–5038. For copies of more detailed information on the information collection, contact Mrs. Celeste Sickles, APHIS' Information Collection Coordinator, at (301) 734–7477.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Gypsy Moth Identification.

OMB Number: 0579–0104.

Type of Request: Extension of approval of an information collection.

Abstract: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is responsible for, among other things, the control and eradication of plant pests. The Plant Protection Act authorizes the Department to carry out this mission.

To this end, Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), USDA, engages in detection surveys to monitor for the presence of, among other things, the European gypsy moth and the Asian gypsy moth.

The European gypsy moth was introduced into the United States in the 1860's and has been damaging woodland areas in the Northeast for the last 100 years. The Asian gypsy moth, which is not established in this country, is considered to pose an even greater threat to trees and forested areas.

Unlike the flightless European gypsy moth female adult, the Asian gypsy moth female adult is capable of strong directed flight between mating and egg deposition, significantly increasing its ability to spread over a much greater area and become widely established within a short time.

To determine the presence and extent of a European gypsy moth or an Asian gypsy moth infestation, we set traps in

high-risk areas to collect specimens. Once an infestation is identified, control and eradication work (usually involving State cooperation) is initiated to eliminate the moths.

APHIS personnel, with assistance from State agriculture personnel, check traps for the presence of gypsy moths. If a suspicious moth is found in the trap, it is sent to APHIS laboratories at the Otis Methods Development Center in Michigan so that it can be correctly identified through DNA analysis. (Since the European gypsy moth and the Asian gypsy moth are strains of the same species, they cannot be visually distinguished from each other. DNA analysis is the only way to accurately identify these insects.)

The PPQ or State employee submitting the moth for analysis completes a gypsy moth identification worksheet (PPQ Form 305), which accompanies the insect to the laboratory. The worksheet enables both Federal and State regulatory officials to identify and track specific specimens through the DNA identification tests that we conduct.

The information provided by the gypsy moth identification worksheets is vital to our ability to monitor, detect, and eradicate gypsy moth infestations.

We are asking the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to approve our use of this information collection activity for an additional 3 years.

The purpose of this notice is to solicit comments from the public (as well as affected agencies) concerning our information collection. These comments will help us:

(1) Evaluate whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the Agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;

(2) Evaluate the accuracy of our estimate of the burden of the information collection, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

(3) Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and

(4) Minimize the burden of the information collection on those who are to respond, through use, as appropriate, of automated, electronic, mechanical, and other collection technologies, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

Estimate of burden: The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 0.083 hours per response.

Respondents: State cooperators.

Estimated annual number of respondents: 120.

Estimated annual number of responses per respondent: 2.

Estimated annual number of responses: 240.

Estimated total annual burden on respondents: 20 hours. (Due to averaging, the total annual burden hours may not equal the product of the annual number of responses multiplied by the reporting burden per response.)

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for OMB approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Done in Washington, DC, this 10th day of December, 2001.

W. Ron DeHaven,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 01-30897 Filed 12-13-01; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 01-096-1]

Availability of an Environmental Assessment

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability and request for comments.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that an environmental assessment has been prepared by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service relative to the control of *Melaleuca quinquenervia*. The environmental assessment considers the effects of, and alternatives to, the release of two nonindigenous organisms into the environment for use as biological control agents to reduce the severity of melaleuca infestations. The environmental assessment has been prepared to provide the public with documentation of our review and analysis of the potential environmental impacts and plant pest risks associated with releasing these biological control agents into the environment.

DATES: We invite you to comment on the environmental assessment. We will consider all comments we receive that are postmarked, delivered, or e-mailed by January 14, 2002.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by postal mail/commercial delivery or

by e-mail. If you use postal mail/commercial delivery, please send four copies of your comment (an original and three copies) to: Docket No. 01-096-1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3C71, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. 01-096-1. If you use e-mail, address your comment to regulations@aphis.usda.gov. Your comment must be contained in the body of your message; do not send attached files. Please include your name and address in your message and "Docket No. 01-096-1" on the subject line.

You may read the environmental assessment and any comments that we receive on the environmental assessment in our reading room. The reading room is located in room 1141 of the USDA South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC. Normal reading room hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. To be sure someone is there to help you, please call (202) 690-2817 before coming.

APHIS documents published in the **Federal Register**, and related information, including the names of organizations and individuals who have commented on APHIS dockets, are available on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/rad/webrepor.html>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Tracy Horner, Entomologist, Permits and Risk Assessment, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 133, Riverdale, MD 20737-1228; (301) 734-5213.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: As part of an integrated control project to reduce the severity of *Melaleuca quinquenervia* (Cav.) S.T. Blake (Myrtales: Myrtaceae) infestations in Florida, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is proposing to release two nonindigenous organisms, *Boreioglycaspis melaleucae* Moore (Hemiptera: Psyllidae) and *Lophyrotoma zonalis* Rohwer (Hymenoptera: Pergidae) in areas affected by melaleuca.

Melaleuca, a broad-leaf paper bark tree native to Australia, was originally introduced in Florida during the early 1900's as an ornamental and was later planted along dikes and levees for erosion control and to convert wetlands into productive forest lands. Over the last four decades, it has spread throughout southern Florida, displacing native plant and animal species, and threatening the stability of the Florida Everglades ecosystem. The purpose of the proposed action is to reduce the

severity of the infestations of melaleuca throughout the affected areas.

APHIS' current melaleuca control project encompasses the areas known to be infested in central and south Florida and involves an integrated control approach sensitive to site-specific conditions, which may include a combination of physical, biological, and/or chemical controls. In response to permit applications the Agency received for the release of *B. melaleucae*, a psyllid native to Australia, and *L. zonalis*, a sawfly also native to Australia, APHIS is investigating the use of these biological control agents to control melaleuca in the affected areas. If APHIS decides to issue permits to release *B. melaleucae* and/or *L. zonalis*, these organisms would be added to the integrated control methods already available. Presently, there is only one biological control agent, a nonindigenous weevil (*Oxyops vitiosa*), used to suppress melaleuca.

APHIS has completed an environmental assessment that considers the effects of, and alternatives to, releasing *B. melaleucae* and *L. zonalis* into the environment. *B. melaleucae* and *L. zonalis* are known to attack only species within the family Myrtaceae. Our findings indicate that *L. zonalis* and *B. melaleucae* will not develop on any native species of Myrtaceae, but may temporarily feed on, and cause minor damage to, introduced species of *Callistemon* and Myrtaceae, and possibly wax myrtle. There is no evidence that the release of these two biological control agents will adversely affect threatened and endangered species or their habitat, or cultural, historical, and archaeological resources.

L. zonalis is being tested for toxicity to vertebrates because a closely related species, *Lophyrotoma interrupta* Klug, is reported to be toxic to cattle in Australia under certain conditions. Until further testing is completed, *L. zonalis* will not be released into the environment. Therefore, we are considering the release of *B. melaleucae* and, pending further testing, the release of *L. zonalis* to reduce the severity of melaleuca infestations in Florida.

APHIS' review and analysis of the potential environmental impacts associated with releasing these biological control agents into the environment are documented in detail in an environmental assessment entitled "Field Release of Two Biological Control Agents *Boreioglycaspis melaleucae* Moore (Hemiptera: Psyllidae) and *Lophyrotoma zonalis* Rohwer (Hymenoptera: Pergidae) for the Control of *Melaleuca quinquenervia* (Cav.) S.T. Blake (Myrtales: Myrtaceae)