



Hop Growers of Washington

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January 31, 2005

Washington State Department of Agriculture
Endangered Species Program
P.O. Box 42589
Olympia, WA 98504-2589

RE: Comments on WSDA Draft Washington State Endangered Species Plan For Pesticide Use

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft proposed plan.

The Hop Growers of Washington Association is an organization representing hop producers in Washington State. Hops are produced on 20,000 acres in Yakima and Benton Counties, irrigated with water from the Yakima River watershed system. Multiple canals and waterways supply irrigation water to Yakima Valley farms.

Washington produces 75% of the nation's hops, with a \$100 million farm gate value. Hop growers employ over 3,000 full time and seasonal workers in the Yakima Valley which assists with maintaining our rural infrastructure. A significant portion of our crop is exported world-wide that adds additional jobs in transportation, warehousing and processing.

I have been supplied with a copy of the Washington State Potato Commission's comments on this subject dated January 26, 2005 (copy enclosed). With Potato Commission approval, I am adding Hop Growers of Washington support for those comments. We feel the Potato Commission did an excellent job of identifying additional elements that would enhance your program.

We appreciate all the work WSDA staff have done on this plan. It has a solid basis that can be beneficial to Washington State agri-business, listed species and Washington State citizens. We would urge the department to seriously consider the changes listed in the Potato Commission comments so that the "plan" will have more merit. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Steven E. George
Governmental Affairs