



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

MAY 11 2015

Mr. John A. Coleman
Chief Executive Officer
Bay Planning Coalition
1970 Broadway, Suite 940
Oakland, California 94612

Dear Mr. Coleman:

Thank you for your letter of March 19, 2015, to me and Director Donovan of the Office of Management and Budget, in which you encourage us to continue funding the Areawide Pest Management Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service (ARS). I am responding for the Department. Funding for this program was included in the Federal budget presented to Congress by President Obama for fiscal year 2016. I apologize for the delayed response.

I am pleased to hear that the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta has seen benefits from this program, providing assistance to the State toward developing better control strategies for a number of invasive aquatic weeds and other pests threatening the health of this important waterway. In recent years, the ARS Areawide Pest Management Program has provided scientific assistance for other invasive pests that require an areawide, integrated pest management strategy, including the coffee berry borer in Hawaii, the navel orangeworm in California nut crops, and honey bee pests nationwide.

We are just beginning to tackle the infestations of aquatic weeds and other pests in the Delta, but we have come a long way in developing key partnerships with those who have a vested interest in maintaining the ecology and stability of this waterway, and we are glad to hear that you are in support of this program.

Again, thank you for your letter. Should you have any questions about the project, please have a member of your staff contact Dr. Andrew Hammond, Director of the ARS Pacific West Area, at (510) 559-6060.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom J. Vilsack".

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary