Northeast RISCC Management
Regional Invasive Species & Climate Change

February 15, 2022

Committee Chair Raul Grijalva
1511 Longworth House Office Building
(202) 225-2435

Re: Support for the Climate Adaptation Science Centers Act (CASC Act)

To Chair Grijalva,

Please accept this letter in enthusiastic support for *The Climate Adaptation Science Centers Act* (CASC Act), from the Northeast Regional Invasive Species & Climate Change (NE RISCC) Management Network. NE RISCC is a boundary spanning organization founded and supported by the Northeast Climate Adaptation Science Center (NE CASC), focused on adapting to the interacting threats of invasive species and climate change. Since NE RISCC's initiation in 2016, the RISCC model has been expanded to a total of five CASC regions: Northeast, Southeast, Northwest, North Central, and Pacific Islands, collectively the RISCC Networks.

The RISCC networks are a broad partnership of invasion scientists, climate scientists, natural resource managers, policymakers, and stakeholders from the broader public. RISCC Networks aim to reduce the compounding effects of invasive species and climate change by synthesizing relevant science, sharing the needs and knowledge of managers, building stronger scientist-manager communities, and conducting priority research. Supporting these types of boundary spanning activities is critical for addressing the needs of natural resource managers, but is rarely supported by more traditional science funding. Illustrative of the importance of this work, NE RISCC was recognized in 2021 with a Climate Adaptation Leadership Award by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Our work would not be possible without the long-term, consistent commitment of resources from the Climate Adaptation Science Centers.

With CASC support, the RISCC Networks engage in stakeholder-driven, actionable science. The CASC model is unique in that it focuses not just on 'science with a potential application', but on building the connections between scientists and practitioners that creates truly actionable science that is put to use by resource managers. This model allows RISCC research to respond directly to manager needs. For example, a 2018 survey of invasive species managers revealed that identifying high-impact, range-shifting invasive species is a top management priority. Based on this need, RISCC researchers created the 'range expanders listing tool' (www.eddmaps.org/rangeshiftlisting/) to help managers identify invasive plants likely to expand into their county or state with climate change. From these lists, RISCC researchers have then identified invasive species with the highest ecological, agricultural, and economic impacts. This information is being used by Northeast states to prioritize monitoring and management of high-risk, range-shifting invasive species.

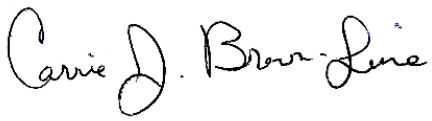
With CASC support, the RISCC Networks synthesize research to make it more accessible to managers and the public. The network summarizes relevant scientific papers for a manager audience and circulates these research summaries on a biweekly basis to our network of over 600

members. We also synthesize research and stakeholder knowledge to produce synthesis papers called *Management Challenges*, on priority topics that have been identified by our stakeholders. To date, we have produced 11 *Management Challenges* on topics including managing invasive species in a changing climate, examining interactions between forest pests and warming temperatures, and understanding risks to salt marshes from invasion and sea level rise. Additionally, RISCC researchers give public presentations and workshops for managers and the public, averaging over 25 per year to a range of organizations and audiences. Delivering science to managers is critical for developing climate-smart invasive species management because states and smaller NGOs have very little capacity to synthesize best management practices. Our work fills an important gap between science and management.

Building effective networks requires a long-term commitment. The CASC Act would shift the support for the CASCs from an uncertain, five-year funding cycle to a commitment to longer-term funding based on performance reviews. Removing uncertainty in long-term funding would enable the RISCC networks to take on larger, multi-year projects with greater positive impacts for states. For example, the initial focus of NE RISCC was terrestrial invasive plants. Through our growing network, we see that managers working in other ecosystems have similar needs for understanding climate-smart invasive species management. Serving additional and emerging critical management needs such as forest pests and marine invasive species management will be possible with long-term stability and increased capacity.

The CASC Act will enable the RISCC Network to continue to conduct priority research and support manager needs to understand and manage the compounding challenges of invasive species and climate change. On behalf of the RISCC Network leadership team, we strongly support the CASC Act.

Sincerely,



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