

TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE ELISE M. STEFANIK

Before the Natural Resources Committee Subcommittee on Water, Oceans and Wildlife

H.R. 6936, the “*Stamp Out Invasive Species Act*”

June 16, 2022

Thank you, Subcommittee Chairman Jared Huffman and Ranking Member Cliff Bentz for holding today’s hearing and providing me the opportunity to testify in support of H.R. 6936, the *Stamp Out Invasive Species Act*.

My district is home to the beautiful Adirondack State Park that includes several lakes and river systems. As the representative for the largest and most diverse ecosystem in New York State, I understand how important it is to manage the risks posed by invasive species.

There are 50,000 non-native invasive animal and plant species in the United States according to the U.S. Forest Service’s Southern Research Station. Each year, these invasive species cost the United States more than \$100 billion in damages.

In Fiscal Year 2021, the Bureau of Land Management was only able to treat 0.33% of infected areas, leaving more than 78 million acres of land with invasive plants untreated. It is clear that more must be done to combat invasive species around the nation.

Today, the U.S. Postal Service has two 75-cent Semipostal fundraising stamps that support Breast Cancer Research and Saving Vanishing Species. Since its issuance in 1998, the Breast Cancer Research Semipostal has raised over \$90 million for breast cancer research. Similarly, the Saving Vanishing Species Semipostal has raised nearly \$7 million to protect threatened and vanishing species. Each make an important contribution to their respective issues.

The *Stamp Out Invasive Species Act* will make the same impact towards raising funds and awareness for combating invasive species around the nation.

My legislation would create a Combating Invasive Species Semipostal Stamp for public purchase. The stamp would be priced 15-25% higher than a normal first-class stamp and would be available for two years. Funds raised by this stamp will directly benefit the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior to support programs which will combat invasive species.

In addition to delivering critical funding, this stamp would raise awareness about invasive species and their potential harm to the economy, environment, and human health. The potential benefits of this stamp are profound as it could lead to increased efforts to mitigate the impact of invasive species while simultaneously providing the public an easy way to contribute to these important efforts.

I would like to thank the cosponsors of this legislation, Representatives Case, Young, Crawford, Thompson, Grijalva, Radewagen, Graves, Soto, Lowenthal, Welch, and Good for their support of programs to combat invasive species.

Thank you again for your consideration of H.R. 6936. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation to help combat invasive species throughout the nation.