

**Statement for the Record
U.S. Department of the Interior**

**House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife**

Legislative Hearing

June 16, 2022

The Department of the Interior appreciates the opportunity to submit this statement for the record on H.R. 6936, Stamp Out Invasive Species Act.

H.R. 6936, Stamp Out Invasive Species Act

The Stamp Out Invasive Species Act, H.R. 6936, would provide public funding, made available through the sale of a Combating Invasive Species Semipostal Stamp for two years, to the Department of the Interior (Department, Interior) and Department of Agriculture (USDA) to combat invasive species. The Department supports H.R. 6936 and would welcome the opportunity to work with the sponsor to ensure that the legislation is consistent with recommendations in the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) 2005 evaluation of semipostals (<https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-05-953.pdf>) pertaining to annual reporting by the Postal Service and the departments; early and continued involvement of advocacy groups for invasive species management to sustain semipostal support; stamp design, promotion, and clear communication about how proceeds will be used; and efficient delivery and implementation of proceeds by building on existing infrastructure and networks.

Invasive species are a leading cause of declining biodiversity and habitat globally. Invasive plants, animals, and pathogens can endanger human health and safety; reduce recreational opportunities and enjoyment by reducing native fish, clogging waterways, and encrusting boats, propellers, and other equipment; reduce agricultural productivity, water supplies, and personal property values; and negatively impact native species in many ways, such as reducing their ability to cope with climate change. This legislation would provide an opportunity for the public to directly contribute to funding programs within Interior and USDA that combat invasive species. In Fiscal Year 2020, Interior invested an estimated \$145 million on invasive species activities (National Invasive Species Council [Crosscut Budget – FY 2021](#)). H.R. 6936 would supplement funding for managing invasive species and raise public awareness about the damage they cause. To that end, the Department would support the addition of reporting requirements on semipostal expenditures to complement the Postal Service requirements under 39 U.S.C. §416, with a primary focus on outcomes achieved. This information would be used to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the program, as required in the Foundations for Evidence-based Policymaking Act of 2018.

Interior plays a critical role addressing invasive species by preventing their introduction, working to detect and respond rapidly to new invasions, and controlling and eradicating invasive species that have already established to reduce adverse impacts. In the long-term, the most cost-effective actions are those that prevent invasive species from arriving in the United States and

establishing. Interior has made significant strides in recent years to strengthen partnerships and modernize approaches that detect, control, and eradicate invasive species before they establish and spread, when there is still high likelihood of success. Because of the existing infrastructure and networks for invasive species management, the Department believes that the funds from the proposed semipostal can be readily and efficiently used.

Most Interior bureaus carry out invasive species management and do so within their respective authorities and mandates. Interior's [Invasive Species Strategic Plan, 2021-2025](#) provides overarching direction on advancing a range of actions such as prevention, early detection and rapid response (EDRR), control, and restoration. Examples of efforts undertaken in collaboration with other Federal agencies, States, Tribes, and other partners include:

- Invasive carps: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) are developing new detection and control methods to reduce the further spread of invasive carps, reduce their populations, and stop their spread into the Great Lakes;
- Burmese pythons: The National Park Service (NPS), USFWS, and USGS are exploring a range of tools to detect and control invasive pythons in the greater Everglades ecosystem;
- Zebra and quagga mussels: The Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, USFWS, NPS, Bureau of Reclamation, and USGS are supporting research and programs that educate boaters and develop tools to contain the spread of invasive mussels in western waters, and are engaged in watercraft inspection and decontamination programs;
- Imports: USFWS is using regulatory and non-regulatory measures to prevent the introduction of invasive species into the country;
- Zoonoses and pathogens: USGS and USFWS are researching the causes and drivers of threats to wildlife and people, such as tick and mosquito-borne pathogens, avian influenza, and plague, and developing controls;
- Wildfire: BLM, USFWS, and USGS are implementing strategies to manage invasive annual grasses, such as cheatgrass, in the Great Basin to protect habitat and minimize associated wildfire risks;
- Islands: The Office of Insular Affairs, NPS, USFWS, and USGS are targeting actions in island areas to safeguard native species, biological diversity, cultural practices, human health, and livelihoods; and
- Early Detection and Rapid Response: Interior is advancing components of a national Early Detection and Rapid Response Framework, a coordinated set of actions to find invasions early in the invasion process and eradicate infestations before they establish, spread, and cause harm.

Funds from a semipostal stamp could contribute toward costs of implementing these and other strategic efforts to prevent or forestall long-term adverse impacts of invasive species across the nation.