



County of Santa Cruz

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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JEFF ALMQUIST
FIFTH DISTRICT

AGENDA: 6/5/01

May 25, 2001

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: BIOLOGICAL CONTROL WEED ERADICATION PROGRAM

Dear Members of the Board:

Board members are well aware of the significant problems caused by certain invasive species of weeds. French Broome is one example of such a weed that not only produces environmental damage by crowding out native plants but also creates public safety concerns as it blocks sight distances along rural roadways.

Over the years, the County has tried various methods to control these noxious weeds. Herbicides, though still used, are seen by many as posing public health dangers. In addition, their effectiveness is limited. Machine mowing and hand cutting are expensive and of limited effectiveness as well. In my District, residents of both Bonny Doon and the Swanton Road area have been particularly frustrated with the French Broome infestation and County efforts to eradicate it. I know that other Districts face similar problems.

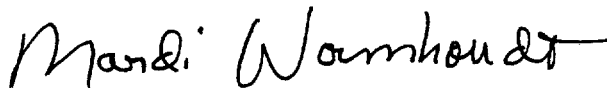
I recently met with the Agricultural Commissioner and his Assistant to discuss ways of reducing the impacts of French Broome in our County. He told me that biological control techniques have been tried elsewhere with some success. They have been very carefully tested to assure that there are no negative side effects. Because our County is designated as a Weed Management Area, we are eligible for State funding to

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support efforts to deal with the weed infestation problem. The Agricultural Commissioner thought that a biological control weed eradication program fit into the guidelines for how these funds could be used. In my view, it is reasonable for the County to submit a proposal to establish such a program. This proposal would contain a survey component as well as a biological control eradication component.

Therefore, I recommend that the Board of Supervisors direct the Agricultural Commissioner to prepare a biological control weed abatement program proposal along the lines outlined in this letter for the Board's consideration in time to apply for the next round of appropriate State funding.

Sincerely,



MARDI WORMHOUDT, Supervisor
Third District

MW:lg

cc: Agricultural Commissioner

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