

Date

The Honorable Eric Holcomb  
Governor of Indiana

Dear Governor Holcomb,

The undersigned organizations are writing to respectfully request that the Department of Natural Resources move forward with the Terrestrial Plant Rule Amendment. This amendment adds twelve highly invasive plant species to the rule that bans their sale, distribution, and transport in Indiana (312 IAC 18-3-25). The full list of invasive species in the amendment is Callery pear, Norway maple, sweet autumn clematis, burning bush, moneywort, Chinese maiden grass, wild parsnip, Fine Line buckthorn, spreading hedge parsley, Japanese hedge parsley, and highbush cranberry.

**Invasive plant species cost Indiana money.** Indiana landowners and land managers spend more than \$8.6 million dollars annually to combat invasive species on their land. This is assuredly an underestimate, as a full survey of landowners in Indiana has not been done. One federal property in Indiana is spending over \$100,000 to manage just one of the twelve species, Callery pear, every year to keep it from taking over thousands of acres of forest.

**Invasive plant species harm the environment.**

- Invasive plants hurt wildlife by crowding out the plants our native animals need for food and cover.
- Most invasive shrubs and trees are little used by native insects. This reduces habitat for beneficial pollinators and predatory insects, as well as reducing the amount of food available for birds to feed their nestlings.
- Invasive plants destroy habitat for rare wildflowers and animals, threatening two-thirds of all endangered species.
- Invasive plants can become weedy in a home garden, crowding out landscaping plants.
- Invasive plants can also decrease enjoyment of hunting, fishing, mushroom collecting, bird-watching, and many other recreational pursuits by crowding forest floors and choking waterways, making use of these areas difficult.
- The delay in implementing this rule amendment has meant that thousands more invasive plants have been sold and planted in the state, further compounding the problem we face.

**Most invasive plant species are introduced through landscaping and other plantings.**

Over 86% of naturalized woody shrubs species have been deliberately introduced for landscaping, soil erosion control, or forestry purposes. Horticulture is the leading source of invasive plant species, and stopping their continued introduction through this rule amendment is crucial.

The original Terrestrial Plant Rule to ban 44 species was passed in 2020, and the current amendment was drafted in 2021 to add twelve highly invasive species. Unfortunately, the DNR has not been able to move this rule amendment forward due to other priorities. We ask that you prioritize this effort to reduce the economic and environmental impact of invasive plant species in Indiana.

Respectfully yours,

[List of organizations]