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Contact: Yancey Roy
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(518) 402-8000

NEW YORK APPLAUDS NEW FEDERAL REGULATIONS ON FIREWOOD Mandates that Imported Firewood Be Treated

New federal requirements mandating that firewood imported from Canada be treated to kill pests and diseases will help protect New York trees from invasive insects and deadly infections, state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) officials said today.

Under the requirement, any untreated hardwood firewood is banned from crossing the border. The federal order, issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, was created to prevent invasive pests such as the Asian Long-horned Beetle and the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) from moving into new areas of the U.S. One of the easiest and most common ways for these pests to spread is by the unintentional transportation of infested firewood. Insects can nest in logs and hitchhike hundreds of miles, only to escape to infect new timber stands.

The requirement is similar to New York's emergency regulation on firewood, adopted earlier this year, that bans untreated firewood from entering the state. Both New York and the federal government now require that firewood must be heated to a core temperature of 71 degrees Celsius (160 degrees Fahrenheit) for 75 minutes in order to be moved without restriction. New York's rules further restrict intrastate movement of untreated firewood to no more than a 50-mile radius from its source.

"With this requirement, the federal government has acknowledged the serious threat posed to our forests and trees by invasive pests," said New York State Forester Robert K. Davies. "The order will significantly reduce the risks of the inadvertent introduction of invasive and destructive pests – and potentially will save millions of trees."

Although the Emerald Ash Borer has not yet been detected in New York, Canada and New York's neighboring states are battling this pest which has killed more than 50 million ash trees. In addition, a new large infestation of Asian Long-horned Beetles – killer of maples, birches and other hardwood trees – was found in more than 4,000 trees in Worcester, Mass., prompting a large-scale eradication effort. New York DEC staff has been assisting Massachusetts foresters address the problem.

For more information about New York's firewood regulations or about invasive species, visit www.dec.ny.gov

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