

Decision and Finding of No Significant Impact
for
Field Release of *Laricobius osakensis* Montgomery and Shiyake
(Coleoptera: Derodontidae),
a predatory beetle for Biological Control of Hemlock Woolly Adelgid,
***Adelges tsugae* (Hemiptera: Adelgidae), in the Continental United States**

June 2010

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) Pest Permitting Branch is proposing to issue permits for release of a nonindigenous predatory beetle, *Laricobius osakensis* (Coleoptera: Derodontidae) into the environment in the continental United States. This species would be released by the applicant as a biological control of the hemlock wooly adelgid (HWA), *Adelges tsugae*, an invasive pest of hemlock trees (*Tsuga* spp.) in eastern North America. Since *Laricobius osakensis* is non-indigenous to any State, territory or possession of the United States, issuing a permit for release into the environment is subject to the APHIS' National Environmental Policy Act implementing regulations (7CFR Part 372). Therefore, prior to proposing to issue permits for release of *L. osakensis*, APHIS prepared an environmental assessment (EA) that analyzes the potential environmental consequences of this action. The EA is available from:

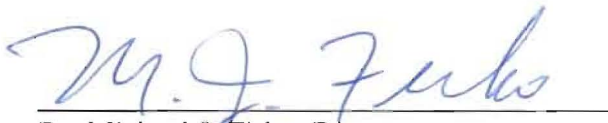
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health inspection Service
Plant Protection and Quarantine
Registrations, Identification, Permits, and Plant Safeguarding
4700 River Road, Unit 133
Riverdale, MD 20737
http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant_health/ea/index.shtml

The EA analyzed the following two alternatives in response to a request for permits authorizing environmental release of *L. osakensis*: (1) no action, and (2) issue permits for the release of *L. osakensis* for biological control of hemlock wooly adelgid. A third alternative, to issue permits with special provisions or requirements concerning release procedures or mitigating measures, was dismissed from analysis because no issues were raised that indicated that special provisions or requirements were necessary. The No Action alternative, as described in the EA, would likely result in the continued use at the current level of chemical and biological control methods for the management of hemlock wooly adelgid, as well as the loss of hemlock trees in areas where controls are not feasible or effective. These control methods or tree losses described are not alternatives for decisions to be made by the Permit Unit, but are presently ongoing in eastern United States and may continue regardless of permit issuance for field release of *L. osakensis*. Notice of the EA was made available in the Federal Register on May 20, 2010 for a 30-day public comment period. One comment was received on the EA, which was in favor of the release of *L. osakensis*.

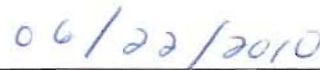
I have decided to authorize the APHIS-PPQ Permit Unit to issue permits for the environmental release of *L. osakensis*. The reasons for my decision are:

- This biological control agent is sufficiently host specific and poses little, if any, threat to the biological resources, including non-target psyllid species, of the continental United States.
- The release will have no effect on federally listed threatened and endangered species or their habitats in the continental United States.
- *L. osakensis* poses no threat to the health of humans or wild or domestic animals.
- No negative cumulative impacts are expected from release of *L. osakensis*.
- There are no disproportionate adverse effects to minorities, low-income populations, or children in accordance with Executive Order 12898 "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations" and Executive Order 13045, "Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks."
- While it is unknown whether release of *L. osakensis* into the environment will be reversible, there is no evidence that this organism will cause any adverse environmental effects.

I have determined that there would be no significant impact to the human environment from issuing permits for release of *Laricobius osakensis* into the environment in the continental United States.



Dr. Michael J. Firko, Director
Registration Imports Permits and Plant Safeguarding
Plant Health Programs
USDA APHIS PPQ,



Date