

Brief Summary of Public Hearing Held On
August 8, 2012
Louis A. Magnarelli, Director

A public hearing on an interior state quarantine for New Haven County and update on the emerald ash borer was held on August 8, 2012 in the Town of Prospect, CT firehouse at 7PM. Legal notices for this hearing were published in the following newspapers on Sunday, July 29, 2012: Hartford Courant, New Haven Register, CT Post, Republican American, and News Times. In addition, notices were sent to the CT Nursery and Landscape Association, Timber Producers Association in CT, and the CT Tree Protective Association.

Dr. Louis A. Magnarelli, Director of the CT Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) presided over the hearing. Additional panel members were Bob Chatfield, Mayor of Prospect; Mike Bohne, U. S. Forest Service; Patricia Douglass, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine; Dr. Kirby C. Stafford, State Entomologist (CAES); and Ken Collette, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). The hearing proceedings were recorded by DEEP and CT Network TV (CT-N) and, respectively, are available upon request or can be purchased.

Louis Magnarelli's opening remarks included the purpose of the hearing, the statutory authority (CT General Statute 22-84) for a quarantine, a statement that proceedings would be recorded, verification for publishing of legal notices in newspapers, and a comment that sign-up sheets were available for persons to speak. The following exhibits were announced for the record: copies of permanent and emergency regulations, copies of the state order to quarantine New Haven County, and copies of application forms for a permit to move regulated articles. It was also mentioned that insect specimens were on display. A statement was made that permanent and emergency regulation documents are posted on the CAES and DEEP websites.

Louis Magnarelli gave an update on the current status of emerald ash borer in CT and other states. He announced that the beetle was first found in the Town of Prospect on July 16, 2012 and was subsequently detected in Naugatuck, Bethany, and Beacon Falls. He indicated that this invasive insect is probably present in many other locations. The surveillance methods (i.e., use of a solitary wasp to capture beetles and purple traps) were discussed. Statements were made about the possible future release of 3 species of parasitic wasps, native to China, to help control the emerald ash borer. These wasps do not sting people or pets.

Another part of the program was devoted to discussing the quarantine, related state regulations (including the emergency firewood regulations) and the permit process. Movement of ash logs, mixed firewood, large ash chips, and other ash-related items out of New Haven County requires a permit issued by the CAES. All firewood requires treatment by one of the following: debarking the materials plus ½ inch of outer wood, heat treatment, fumigation, or kiln sterilization. Ash logs can be moved with a permit during the period October 1 through March 31. There are provisions for moving logs from a non-quarantine county into a quarantined county or even through New Haven County to another non-quarantine county. Louis Magnarelli indicated that the state quarantine must closely follow federal rules and requirements and that a federal quarantine will be placed on New Haven County in about 8 weeks. Clarification was made that federal quarantines are on counties (not portions of counties) and that state quarantines must mirror federal quarantines. A statement was also made that there is free movement of regulated articles within New Haven County without a permit.

The hearing program included time for panelists to make comments regarding the quarantine, regulations, biology of the emerald ash borer, or insect monitoring systems. Some examples were given on how regulated articles would be transported under certain conditions.

The public session of the hearing provided opportunities for citizens to ask questions or make comments. Two government employees spoke: State Representative Vickie Nardello and Kimberly Junior, a spokesperson for Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro. Other persons wanted more clarifications on what wood articles could be moved and the required conditions. A question was asked about the definition of firewood. Louis Magnarelli responded by saying any wood that could be placed in a stove or fireplace. It was clarified during the ensuing question and answer session that firewood was being regulated differently than logs because treatment procedures are required before the firewood can leave New Haven County. An explanation was given by Louis Magnarelli that it is difficult to identify smaller cut pieces of ash from other cut pieces of hardwoods. Therefore, all firewood requires treatment before leaving New Haven County. Logs are easier to identify but still require permits to leave the quarantine zone. A suggestion was made to have DEEP establish a wood disposal site for chips and firewood. Another important question was asked about who is responsible for the quarantine. The answer is whoever moves the regulated articles. It was also suggested that there should be a consolidated website involving CAES, DEEP, and other agencies for a common website to minimize duplication and confusion and to facilitate public access to records and information. The hearing closed at 8:30PM.