

Camas County Board of Commissioners
Fairfield, Idaho 83327
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JUN 21 2017

**DIRECTOR'S OFFICE
ID DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE**

June 20, 2017

Brian J. Oakey, Deputy Director
Idaho State Department of Agriculture
PO Box 790
Boise, Idaho 83701-0790

Dear Director Oakey,

Subject: The Board of Commissioners of Camas County – Our Opposition to Listing of Japanese Yew to the Idaho Noxious Weed List

Greetings from Camas County! We are writing you and Lloyd Knight of the IDA Plant Industries Division to respectfully register the Board of Commissioners' opposition to the contemplated listing of Japanese Yew to the Idaho Noxious Weed List. We've discussed this with Camas County Weed Superintendent Terry Lee, who is also the Chairman of the Idaho Association of Weed Control Superintendents. Terry told us that he's written to you and Mr. Knight expressing his opposition, as Chairman of the Association, to the Yew listing, but we would like to express the Board's view on the contemplated listing from the Board's perspective regarding our County government's responsibilities for effective and efficient services.

We would prefer to avoid mission creep!

The Board regards the mission of the Camas County weed control program as deeply critical to the County's services to citizens. As you know, agriculture is the principal lifeline for economic survival of people in Camas County. There are intrinsic significant challenges to agricultural production here – we're a high desert, high-altitude farming community with limited water and a short growing season. Noxious weed infestations are an additional production challenge, and one that merits the full attention of Superintendent Lee and his crew. Terry and the Camas weed crew are conspicuously occupied in dealing with the species already on the Idaho Noxious Weed List; it's a day-by-day battle here, as you no doubt appreciate.

By contrast with invasive weed species now listed, Yew doesn't compete with productive flora. It's entirely domesticated, an elective planting, a tree rather than a weed, and doesn't propagate in any kind of predatory way. Because of this, the Board sees the addition of Yew to the list as a noxious weed could potentially stretch the mission of our county's weed control program beyond its already severe budget and time constraints. There are probably good ways of controlling or limiting poisonous landscape plantings, but in our view, the Noxious Weed program is not the appropriate vehicle.

We appreciate your time and attention to this letter, and are grateful for the work of all the people at the Idaho Department of Agriculture. Thanks!

Sincerely,

Camas County Board of Commissioners