INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA (ISCC) Meeting Minutes

July 6, 2026

Opening Remarks:

Secretary Wade Crowfoot called the July 6, 2026 Invasive Species Council of California (ISCC) meeting to order at 2:00 PM. The meeting was held at California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Building at 1220 N Street, Sacramento, California. Secretary Wade Crowfoot welcomed council members, guests, and staff and remarked on how invasive species impact our economy, activities, and communities in California.

Roll Call:

Ambika Saini called roll and established that a quorum existed for the meeting was met.

ISCC Members Present:

Wade Crowfoot, Secretary – Natural Resources Agency

Virgina Jameson, Deputy Secretary – CDFA on behalf of Secretary Karen Ross

Marlene De La O, Deputy Secretary – California Environmental Protection Agency

Lori Nezhura, Deputy Director – Office of Emergency Services

Jaylen Tran, Senior Climate Change Coordinator – California State Transportation Agency (Caltrans)

ISCC Members Absent:

Julie Souliere, Assistant Secretary – Health and Human Services Agency

Staff Members Present:

Victoria Hornbaker, CDFA – Director of Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services

Gina Darin, California Invasive Species Advisory Committee (CISAC) Chair – Department of Water Resources

Jonathan Babineau – CDFA

Ambika Saini – CDFA

Council Business:

Action item: Approve ISCC Minutes March 16, 2026

The ISCC members reviewed the March 16, 2026 meeting minutes. Deputy Secretary Virginia Jameson moved to approve the minutes as presented and Deputy Secretary

Marlene De La O seconded the motion. The motion carried with all ISCC members in favor.

Action Item: Approve Rapid Response Proposals

Request for Rapid Response funds to support Golden Mussel Inspection and Decontamination in Trinity and Lewiston Lakes

Aly DeNittis, Trinity County Resource Conservation District gave a brief description of the proposal. The request was for funding to form an inspection and decontamination station staff team to prevent the introduction of golden mussels into Trinity and Lewiston Lakes.

Deputy Director Lori Nezhura moved to approve the proposal and Deputy Secretary De La O seconded the motion. The motion carried with all ISCC members in favor.

Request for Rapid Response funds to support Detection and Mitigation Activities for South American Palm Weevil in Orange County

Jose Arriaga, Orange County Agricultural Commissioner (CAC), gave a brief description of the proposal. The request asked for funding to perform detection and mitigation services to prevent South American Palm Weevil establishment in Orange County.

Deputy Director Nezhura moved to approve the proposal and Deputy Secretary De La O seconded the motion. The motion carried with all ISCC members in favor.

Action item: Approve Delegated Authority for Rapid Response Grants to California Invasive Species Advisory Committee (CISAC)

Secretary Crowfoot inquired about the funding source for this category and if there would be a funding cap for that source. Victoria Hornbaker explained that out of the $5,000,000in ISCC funds, there is a finite amount set aside in the category for rapid response projects, with a maximum amount of $100,000 per grant, this is with funding permitting. Sponsorships will be capped at $15,000 per year, funding permitting.

Ms. Hornbaker expanded on the categories inquired by Secretary Crowfoot and said unallocated funds would be reallocated the rapid response projects and for CISAC approving funding decisions for event sponsorships.

Deputy Secretary Jameson moved to approve delegating funding authority to CISAC for sponsorships and rapid response grants. Deputy Secretary De La O seconded the motion. The motion carried with all ISCC members in favor.

Action Item: Approve Proposition 4 Invasive Species Grant Guidelines

Ms. Hornbaker provided the ISCC with a brief overview of Proposition 4 Invasive Species Grant Guidelines, noting that the edits requested from the open public

comment period have been added. Other notable changes were terminology or language changes in the funding duration section.

Deputy Secretary Jameson moved to approve the Proposition 4 Invasive Species Grant Guidelines as presented and Deputy Director Nezhura seconded the motion. The motion carried with all ISCC members in favor.

Action item: Allocate Unspent Fulltime Support Funds

Ms. Hornbaker provided an overview of the ISCC fiscal dashboard which accounts for the $5,000,000 in the Invasive Species Account. The budget overview shows expenditure categories, budgeted amounts, and the expended and unexpended balances. Ms. Hornbaker noted the “fulltime support for ISCC/CISAC” had a budgeted amount of $356,250, with $189,577 expended, and a remainder of $166,673 that will not be further expended. A motion was made to approved reallocation of full-time support funds to allow the unspent funds to be moved to Rapid Response and ISCC Operational Funds.

Deputy Director Nezhura made a motion to reallocate the funds as presented and Deputy Secretary Jameson seconded the motion. The motion carried with all ISCC members in favor.

Presentations/Discussions:

California Invasive Species Advisory Committee (CISAC) Report - Gina Darin, CISAC Chairperson

Gina Darin presented the CISAC report to the council. She noted that seventeen out of nineteen CISAC seats are fully on-boarded, with two open vacancies announced in early July. The executive committee consists of Gina Darin – Department of Water Resources serving as chair, Lisa Worthington – Caltrans serving as vice chair, Dr. Bea Nobua-Behrmann – University of California Cooperation Extension (UCCE) serving as secretary and Dr. Ricky Lara – Department of Food and Agriculture as the past chair.

Ms. Darin highlighted that CISAC has amended their charter and presented the amended version for approval to the ISCC. Another accomplishment is the creation of the ISCC/CISAC fiscal dashboard display. She reiterated the CISAC goals for 2026 which includes, leveraging cross-agency collaboration resources such as the Weed Management Area (WMA) Program sustainability and the invasive shot hole borer collaboration, hosting successful Invasive Species Tours and Summit, and distributing Prop 4 Climate Bond Grant Program funds.

Inversa Invasion Management Presentation - C. Henri Ferré, Inversa Head of Development

C. Henri Ferré from Inversa™ gave a presentation on Invasion Management. Their organization has created the world's first technology enabled management platform for invasive species. Inversa™ uses advanced statistical systems, artificial intelligence predictive modeling, advanced detection architectures, technology-enabled rapid intervention, and market-based offtake to accelerate biodiversity improvements and maximize taxpayer investments. Mr. Ferré presented two case studies highlighting the platform's capabilities. The first case study Mr. Ferre shared was on the invasive Burmese python in the Florida Everglades. The second case study he shared was on the invasive lionfish destroying coral reefs in Florida. As a result of their efforts there has been a reduction in the burden on Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissions by using private-sector funding and increasing eradication work.

During his presentation Mr. Ferré explained how managing invasive pests with current practices would cost billions of dollars to the state. He used California's feral hog population as an example and estimated that at current cost efficiencies, achieving the target removals would cost hundreds of millions per year. Mr. Ferré also displayed information on "Origin" which is a centralized system from Inversa™ that manages multimodal detection pathways, triages inputs, and guides field operations. The system removes current friction between the identification, analysis, and action stages of invasive management. Lastly, Mr. Ferré demonstrated how the multi-model probabilistic detection pathways and intervention strategies can help state agencies in expanding efforts, persevering in the ecosystem and advancing invasive species management.

Secretary Crowfoot remarked on the good use of technology and software around invasive species management. Deputy Secretary Jameson asked if there was different technology equipped for varying species. Mr. Ferré answered yes, depending on the invasive species, and the approach of management needed. Deputy Secretary Jameson asked about the data sources used and how it interacts with public data. Mr. Ferré answered that they do use public data, and additional data is collected centrally by field specialists and available for agency partners. Deputy Secretary Jameson asked if the cost of removal is analyzed by technology and Mr. Ferré answered that they aim to maximize efficiency and cost related to the management needed. Secretary Crowfoot commented the council should consider how to partner with entities like Inversa™ to leverage data and technology for accelerating threats and impacts from invasive species.

Comprehensive Pest Prevention Program Analysis (C3PA) Review - Dr. Neil McRoberts, UC Davis

Dr. Neil McRoberts from University of California, Davis gave a presentation on the Comprehensive Pest Prevention Program Analysis (C3PA). This program is a

collaboration between local CACs and the CDFA and provides an assessment of select statewide programs.

Dr. McRoberts explained that the last comprehensive review of California's pest prevention system was done thirty years ago. He remarked that the current climate in California is very different from the mid-1990s, and no quantitative analyses were available to support the case for new investment in pest prevention until now. The changing economic and policy landscape (e-commerce, international travel, California's Sustainable Pest Management (SPM) Roadmap, state sustainability goals etc.) require a modern approach. The report focuses on three main pest prevention programs, including state border inspection stations, detector dog teams for mail/package facilities and high-risk pest exclusion programs. The analyses of these pest prevention programs examined cost-effectiveness and return on investment values along with other relevant factors.

Dr. McRoberts highlighted that the top twenty crop commodities in California by value, showing the financial losses attributable to pests and pathogens, averaged over $563 million annually ($270,000,000 in producer surplus and $290,000,000 in consumer surplus) between 2020-2022. Another aspect of the report examined policy analyses related to the SPM roadmap. These policies included detection and exclusion efforts, eradication and containment efforts, and the development of biological control methods. Secretary Crowfoot remarked it was important to see how investment in prevention helps to avoid potential costs that can be significantly higher later.

Progress on Leveraging Interagency Collaboration

Weed Management Area working Group Report -Tom Getts, UC Cooperative Extension

Tom Getts from UCCE gave a presentation on the CISAC working group's report for WMAs. The report was written in response to ISCC directive from the December 2025 meeting, and the CISAC working group on WMAs was formed to enhance interagency collaboration. Mr. Getts stated that CISAC views WMAs as an effective system for interagency collaboration at the local level and allow federal and county partners to join and prioritize targeting local weeds for early detection and rapid response. Mr. Getts identified the ability of WMAs to leverage funding state funding four-to-one as an indicator of success; however, state funding is no longer consistently available.

Mr. Getts explained that the current funding for WMAs is for three years, 2026-2028. Noting that the consistent WMA funding is supported by the CACs, Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs), Sierra Foothills Conservancy, Land Trusts, California Cattlemen, California Native Plant Society, California Invasive Pest Council (Cal-IPC) and more. Mr. Getts noted that invasive plants cause harm to agricultural systems and

natural resources, while increasing the need for weed management through mandates and initiatives. Additionally, Mr. Getts pointed out CDFA's WMA program is key to successful weed management and should be part of CDFAs baseline budget to avoid gaps in funding. Lastly, he emphasized that the WMA program is cost-effective, highlights the benefits of investing in land stewardship, and catalyzes significant in-kind contributions from local partners.

Secretary Crowfoot asked for clarity on WMAs. Mr. Getts explained that most WMAs are headed up by the local CACs or RCDS and joined by other interested organizations to coordinate efforts.

Invasive Shothole Borer Collaboration Lessons Learned - Dr. Bea Nobua-Behrmann

Dr. Bea Nobua-Behrmann spoke about invasive shothole borer (ISHB), focusing on collaboration and lessons learned through statewide response efforts. The response plan was developed through the ISHB subcommittee holding public meetings and collaborating with multiple stakeholders and other interested parties to identify the priorities and utilize the funds. A major strength of the initiative is its collaborative, multi-agency structure, which allows organizations to contribute according to their respective expertise, authority, and capacity.

Dr. Nobua-Behrmann explained that the statewide effort brought together many partners to address the different aspects of the ISHB response. Local CACs and RCDs conduct trapping and localized monitoring efforts. University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UCANR) provided statewide monitoring, data synthesis, mapping, and outreach and education coordination. UCANR researchers contributed research on pest epidemiology, management strategies, biological control, and economic impacts. Cal Fire provided an additional $5 million to support management activities, including the removal of heavily infested trees to mitigate impacts and contain pest spread.

One of the most important lessons from the statewide response Dr. Nobua-Behrmann emphasized was that its effectiveness depends on the different components working together. The monitoring and detection activities informed management decisions, while outreach and education increased public awareness and encouraged pest reporting. The research helped develop management recommendations, and the coordination of shared data facilitated information exchange across jurisdictions, and local partners translated statewide guidance into practical, on-the-ground actions. The experience demonstrated that detection, research, outreach, coordination, and management must occur simultaneously and cohesively to achieve an effective statewide pest response.

Invasive Species Tours Planning Update and Approve Underserved Tour Participant Criteria - Dr. Shannon Lynch, CISAC Outreach Subcommittee Chairperson

Dr. Shannon Lynch provided updates from the Outreach Subcommittee for the invasive species tours, including a participant criteria document. The invasive species regional tours are planned for August 2026. Dr. Lynch stated that the tours are designed to bring together state agency representatives, professionals, tribal partners, local government, and other stakeholders to provide field-based insight into top invasive species issues affecting California's natural and management landscape. Additionally, Dr. Lynch detailed that the tours would highlight regional prevention and response efforts while recognizing the partners leading and supporting this work. The primary tour goals are to strengthen participants' understanding of California's pest prevention system, identify opportunities to improve statewide coordination, and explore ways to protect agriculture, natural resources, and California's unique biodiversity. Dr. Lynch also commented that the tours will help inform the summit's broader objectives, including identifying California's most significant invasive species threats to agriculture, natural resources, and human health, increasing governmental understanding of potential solutions, and prioritizing three to five major threats and realistic actions to address them.

Dr. Lynch said tour discussions will incorporate overarching themes of climate change, SPM, and stewardship through both species-specific and pathways-based approaches. She said the committee's planning efforts are focused on accommodating approximately one hundred participants per tour while ensuring geographic representation of Californias biodiverse landscapes and topography, and coverage of multiple invasive species groups, including animals, insects, pathogens, terrestrial and aquatic plants.

Additionally, Dr. Lynch provided an overview of a criteria for travel support for interested participants from underserved communities, noting that CISAC is offering ten travel stipends to increase participation. The committee has developed selection criteria to prioritize applicants who demonstrate financial need or limited individual or institutional travel support, are directly affected by or contribute to California's invasive species management or pest prevention efforts and can explain how their participation would contribute to tour outcomes, regional learning, or future cross-jurisdictional coordination.

Invasive Species Summit Planning - Council Discussion

Deputy Secretary Jameson provided an update on the Invasive Species Summit. The summit is scheduled for October 1 – 2, 2026, at the California Natural Resources Agency. Deputy Secretary Jameson shared that the feedback gathered from the ISCC members included the importance of strengthening early detection, prevention, and response efforts through improved coordination among state agencies, regional partners, and local communities. Deputy Secretary Jameson noted topics of interest include reducing impacts to ecosystems, minimizing pesticide usage, incorporating sustainable pest management roadmap goals, and addressing the connections between invasive species and broader priorities such as climate change, wildfire prevention and

the 30X30 initiative. Furthermore, Deputy Secretary Jameson stated another important consideration is determining when an invasive species incident transitions from an emergency response to a long-term management issue, especially when addressing established species across jurisdictional boundaries and public and private lands.

CNRA Deputy Secretary for Biodiversity Madeline Drake shared additional feedback for the summit, emphasizing shifting the summit toward a more collaborative, high level, and solution-oriented approach rather than exclusively focused on individual species. While species-specific discussions may be still valuable, the summit should prioritize cross-cutting response strategies, communication, and partnerships that can be applied across multiple invasive species issues. Participant feedback to Deputy Secretary Drake also included a recommendation to connect invasive species management to other statewide priorities, including 30X30, One Health, and emergency management, while creating an engaging and informative environment that encourages collaboration, problem-solving, and actionable solutions.

Deputy Director Nezhura commented it would be nice to see open collaboration at the summit and wants there to be discussion on identifying hazards in jurisdictions.

Senior Climate Change Coordinator Jaylen Tran commented there should be a focus on interagency coordination in the discussions at the summit. Learning from different agencies and how to effectively control and eradicate invasives species enhances our ability to combat these invasive species issues.

Deputy Secretary De La O commented on invasive weed removal, and that there could be valuable statewide conversations on how to conduct weed abatement under sustainable pest management. She also suggested showcasing examples at the summit of how coordination around prevention is effective.

Secretary Crowfoot commented that he is excited to see how the summit will build awareness of the costs, challenges and threats dealing with invasive species management. Additionally, he wants to see solutions on how to improve and strengthen responses to invasive species and how to integrate advanced technologies into potential solutions.

Public Comment:

Chris Reardon commented on the WMA discussion and supports any additional funding for this issue.

Jutta Burger from Cal-IPC echoed support for WMA funding and said it is critical for achieving invasive plant management. It enhances coordination and collaboration capacity among local organizations.

Matt Hurley from Fresno County serves on the RCDs Board of Directors also echoed support for both RCDs and WMAs.

Isobel Nairn from the California Plant Society Conservation organization also voiced support for additional funding for WMAs.

A.G Kawamura from Solutions from the Land commented that their organization notices the trend of invasive species introductions is increasing. He noted that steady funding, prevention and exclusion and lack of public awareness are all issues to address at the summit.

Peter Brastow from the San Francisco WMA echoed the support for increased funding. He shared that their WMA model is different than others as they have a local nonprofit to do fiscal component and can successfully utilize their WMA funding.

Dr. Shannon Lynch emphasized she would like to see discussion at the summit as part of pest prevention systems to include investment in monitoring and coordination between subject matter experts and other team components.

Closing Comment:

Secretary Crowfoot thanked the ISCC members for their participation in the meeting, and the CISAC for their work through ISCC.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:04 PM. The next ISCC meeting is to be scheduled.