

**WESTERN PLANT BOARD:**

Alaska -- Arizona -- California -- Colorado -- Hawaii -- Idaho -- Montana  
Nevada -- New Mexico -- Oregon -- Utah -- Washington -- Wyoming

**CENTRAL PLANT BOARD:**

Illinois -- Indiana -- Iowa -- Kansas -- Michigan -- Minnesota -- Missouri  
North Dakota -- Nebraska -- Ohio  
South Dakota -- Wisconsin



**EASTERN PLANT BOARD:**

Connecticut -- Delaware -- Massachusetts -- Maryland -- Maine  
New Hampshire -- New Jersey -- New York -- Pennsylvania  
Rhode Island -- Vermont -- West Virginia

**SOUTHERN PLANT BOARD:**

Alabama -- Arkansas -- Florida -- Georgia -- Kentucky -- Louisiana  
Mississippi -- North Carolina -- Oklahoma -- Puerto Rico -- South  
Carolina -- Tennessee -- Texas -- Virginia

**Ken Rauscher, President**

Michigan Department of Agriculture  
Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division  
P.O. Box 30017  
Lansing, MI 48909  
517-373-4087

**Gray Haun, Vice-President**

Tennessee Department of Agriculture  
Division of Regulatory Services  
P.O. Box 40627, Melrose Station  
Nashville, TN 37204  
615-837-5338

**Aurelio Posadas, Secretary-Treasurer**

California Department of Food and Agriculture  
Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services  
1220 N Street, Room A-316  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
916-654-0317

**2005 Annual Meeting  
Biloxi, Mississippi**

**RESOLUTION NO. 3**

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION  
VACANT POSITIONS AT PORTS OF ENTRY**

United States ports of entry are considered to be the first line of protection for the nation's agricultural and environmental resources. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Homeland Security Act of 2002 established the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and charged it with coordinating U.S. efforts to protect against terrorist activities, including agroterrorism. Approximately 2,700 agricultural inspectors at the ports, support personnel, and AQI user fees were transferred from USDA to DHS in 2003. To assist in this transition and to encourage joint agency cooperation, the National Plant Board, along with regional plant boards, has aggressively encouraged the participation of Custom and Border Protection (CBP) in both national and regional plant board meetings.

In March of 2005, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) published a report to Congress on the work Homeland Security is doing to protect agriculture from a terrorist attack. Although the main emphasis of the report was on agroterrorism, the main threat posed to plant resources is the inadvertent introduction of plant pests on plant products entering the U.S. in commercial freight shipments or in personal shipments that are hand-carried or mailed. Unfortunately, the number of newly introduced plant pests continues to grow at a historically high rate. The GAO report noted that since the transfer of agricultural inspectors from USDA to DHS-Customs and Border Protection in 2003, there have been fewer inspections of agricultural products at the nation's ports of entry. Also, when the transfer was made, there were 500 vacant agricultural inspector positions, and at the time of the GAO report there were approximately 800 vacancies nationwide. Although progress has been made in filling these positions, the vacant positions and resulting decrease in inspections, leaves U.S. plant resources more vulnerable to the introduction of exotic plant pests, as well as acts of agroterrorism.

**Be it resolved,** that the National Plant Board, at its annual meeting held in Biloxi, Mississippi on August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2005, requests that DHS-Customs and Border Protection continue their concerted efforts to fill vacant agricultural inspector positions, that USDA-APHIS-PPQ and DHS determine the reasons for declining pest interceptions, and that DHS quickly increase inspections to appropriate levels. Further, the National Plant Board appreciates and encourages Customs and Border Protection officials' participation in both the regional and national meetings of the National Plant Board and the National Plant Board stands ready to participate in Customs and Border Protection meetings.

**Motion to Adopt: Bill Dickerson, NC**  
**Seconded by: Terry Bourgoïn, ME**

**Distribution:**

Michael Chertoff, Secretary, DHS  
Mike Johanns, Secretary, USDA  
Bill Hawks, Under Secretary, USDA  
Robert C. Bonner, Commissioner, DHS-CBP  
Dr. Ron DeHaven, Administrator, USDA-APHIS-PPQ  
Dr. Richard Dunkle, Deputy Administrator, USDA-APHIS-PPQ  
Rick Kirchhoff, CEO, NASDA  
Gus Douglass, Chairman, Animal and Plant Industries Committee, NASDA  
National Plant Board, President  
National Plant Board, Board of Directors