Decision and Finding of No Significant Impact
for
Field Release of *Encarsia diaspidicola* (Hymenoptera: Aphelinidae) for Biological Control of White Peach Scale, *Pseudaulacaspis pentagona* (Hemiptera: Diaspididae), in Hawai'i
June 2011

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) Pest Permitting Branch (PPB), is proposing to issue permits for release of an insect, *Encarsia diaspidicola* (Hymenoptera: Aphelinidae), in Hawai'i. The agent would be used by the applicant for the biological control of white peach scale, *Pseudaulacaspis pentagona* (Hemiptera: Diaspididae). The issuance by APHIS of a permit for release of this organism into the environment in Hawai'i is subject to USDA APHIS National Environmental Policy Act implementing regulations (7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 372). Because *E. diaspidicola* is neither native nor established in Hawai'i, APHIS has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) that analyzes the potential environmental consequences of this proposed action in accordance with 7 CFR 372.5 (b) (ii) (4). This 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 *E. diaspidicola*: (1) no action, and (2) issue permits for the release of *E. diaspidicola* for biological control of white peach scale. A third alternative, to issue permits with special provisions or requirements concerning release procedures or mitigating measures, was considered. However, this alternative was dismissed 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 mechanical control methods and post-harvest treatments for the management of white peach scale. These control methods described are not alternatives for decisions to be made by the PPB, but are presently being used to control white peach scale in Hawai'i and may continue regardless of permit issuance for field release of *E. diaspidicola*. Legal notice of the EA was made available in the Hawaii Tribune Herald and the Hawaii Star-Advertiser on May 8, 2011 for a 30-day public comment period. In addition, notice was published in The Environmental Notice (published by the Hawai'i Office of Environmental Quality Control) on May 8, 2011. One comment was received on the EA. The comment was summarized and addressed in appendix 2 of the final EA.

I have decided to authorize the PPB to issue permits for the environmental release of *E. diaspidicola*. 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 insect species of Hawai'i.

- The release will have no effect on federally listed threatened and endangered species or their habitats in Hawai'i.

- *E. diaspidicola* poses no threat to the health of humans.

- No negative cumulative impacts are expected from release of *E. diaspidicola.*

- 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 there is not total assurance that the release of *E. diaspidicola* 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 the implementation of the preferred alternative (issuance of permits for the release of *E. diaspidicola in* Hawai'i).

M. J. Firko

6/24/2011

Dr. Michael J. Firko
Director
Registrations, Identification, Permits, and Plant Safeguarding
Plant Health Programs
APHIS, Plant Protection and Quarantine

Date