



Healthy Plants • Healthy World

July 10, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing on behalf of the American Phytopathological Society, the largest society of plant doctors in the world, to encourage you to appoint a Director and Associate Directors of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). The OSTP is critical to effective leadership in science by providing advisors for the nation's science and technology policies and programs. Looking at the history of our nation, science and technology have been and will continue to be a key to our innovation, competitiveness, and economic growth.

When human, animal, and plant diseases and cybersecurity outbreaks occur, the OSTP serves as a source of credible information and analysis to help direct the White House lead a national response to contain these outbreaks and protect from future ones. Recent outbreaks in the US include the Zika virus and citrus greening, a disease currently decimating the Florida citrus industry. The OSTP also plays a central role in helping the White House craft forward-looking science policies to keep the US at the cutting edge of manufacturing technologies and advances in medicine, agriculture, space exploration, and national security.

We are a non-profit organization comprised of members who have dedicated their careers to managing diseases and insects that threaten the sustainability and profitability of our food supply. Like the Zika virus, many plant pathogens and pests are expanding their ranges, and this threatens our nation's agricultural productivity. A safe and abundant food supply is critical to continued US economic growth and prosperity.

The appointment of staff at the OSTP is critical for the White House to direct policies that maximize the continued health of our nation and its food supply in the face of challenges like those mentioned above. The OSTP also helps ensure that training in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) remains strong, as this training is essential to providing well-equipped candidates for a large number of agricultural and technological jobs in our country.

We thank you for considering our request on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

Tim Murray
President, The American Phytopathological Society

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