

**Decision and Finding of No Significant Impact**  
**for**  
**Field Release of the Knotweed Psyllid *Aphalara itadori* (Hemiptera: Psyllidae) for Classical**  
**Biological Control of Japanese, Giant, and Bohemian Knotweeds, *Fallopia japonica*, *F.***  
***sachalinensis*, and *F. x bohemica* (Polygonaceae), in the Contiguous United States.**  
**January 2020**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is proposing to issue permits for environmental release of the knotweed psyllid *Aphalara itadori* (Hemiptera: Psyllidae). This agent would be used for the biological control of Japanese, giant, and Bohemian knotweeds, *Fallopia japonica*, *F. sachalinensis*, and *F. x bohemica* (Polygonaceae) in the contiguous United States. Before permits are issued for release of *A. itadori*, APHIS must analyze the potential impacts of its release into the contiguous United States in accordance with USDA, APHIS National Environmental Policy Act implementing regulations (7 Code of Federal Regulations Part 372). APHIS has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) that analyzes the potential environmental consequences of this action. The EA is available from:

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
Plant Protection and Quarantine  
Pests, Pathogens, and Biocontrol Permits  
4700 River Road, Unit 133  
Riverdale, MD 20737

[http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant\\_health/ea/index.shtml](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 *A. itadori*: (1) no action, and (2) issue permits for the release of *A. itadori* for biological control of invasive knotweeds (preferred alternative). 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 controls for the management of invasive knotweeds. These control methods described are not alternatives for decisions to be made by APHIS, but are presently being used to control invasive knotweeds in the United States and may continue regardless of permit issuance for field release of *A. itadori*. Notice of this EA was made available in the Federal Register on May 28, 2019 for a 30-day public comment period. APHIS received a total of 221 comments on the EA by the close of that comment period, and received a request to extend the comment period. APHIS extended the comment period for 60 more days and received an additional 80 comments. Most comments (170) were in favor of the release of *A. itadori*. There were 131 comments that were either not in favor of or raised concerns regarding the release of *A. itadori*, mainly regarding potential impacts to honey bees and other pollinators. These comments are addressed in appendix 4 of the EA.

I have decided to authorize APHIS to issue permits for the environmental release of *A. itadori*. The reasons for my decision are:

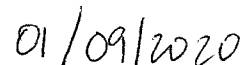
- *Aphalara itadori* is sufficiently host specific and poses little, if any, threat to the biological resources, including non-target plant species and pollinators, of the contiguous United States.
- *Aphalara itadori* is not likely to adversely affect federally listed threatened and endangered species or their critical habitats in the contiguous United States.
- *Aphalara itadori* poses no threat to human or wildlife health.
- *Aphalara itadori* is expected to result in benefits to soil, wildlife, property, and recreational opportunities.
- No negative cumulative impacts are expected from release of *Aphalara itadori*.
- 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 *A. itadori* 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 and, therefore, no Environmental Impact Statement needs to be prepared.



---

Steven Crook, Director  
Permitting and Coordination Compliance  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service  
Plant Protection and Quarantine



---

Date