



WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

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May 1, 2015

Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young
Administrator
USDA Agricultural Research Service
Jamie L. Whitten Building, Room 302-1A
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Dr. Jacobs-Young,

On behalf of Western Governors, I write to request USDA-Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service submit their registration package to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to register the weed suppressive bacteria *Pseudomonas fluorescens* (ACK55) as a host-specific biopesticide agent for broad-scale application to combat invasive grasses.

ACK55 is designed to suppress cheatgrass and medusahead, invasive plants that fuel destructive wildfires costing billions of dollars annually in crop and habitat losses, property damage, fire suppression activities, environmental damages and post-fire restoration efforts. Independent tests, along with 12 years of laboratory and field research, indicate that ACK55 is nontoxic and nonpathogenic.

There is a particular urgency to deploy new tools to battle cheatgrass. The likelihood and intensity of wildfires is increased by the presence of this invasive species. Cheatgrass crowds out native vegetation that provides important habitat to stressed species, such as the greater sage-grouse, which is currently being considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act. Biopesticides like ACK55 offer promise as tools to disrupt the invasive weed-fire cycle and its negative impacts on habitat, homes and property.

For over six months Western Governors have been told that the registration submission is imminent. The ability to begin landscape efficacy trials this fall is jeopardized by the ongoing delay in the submission of the registration package.

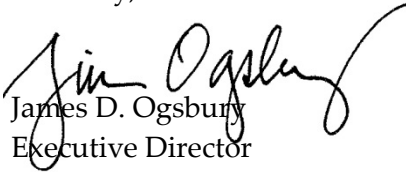
WGA understands that ARS tasked the IR-4 Project at Rutgers with submitting the ACK55 registration package to EPA; IR-4 represents the registration package should be ready by mid-May. The Governors urge ARS to have IR-4 complete the registration submission without further delay and to encourage EPA to expedite the registration process.

Dr. Chavonda Jacobs-Young

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Sincerely,



James D. Ogsbury
Executive Director

cc: J.J. Baron, Executive Director, IR-4 Project, NJ Agricultural Experiment Station, Rutgers,
The State University of New Jersey
Bill Barney, Associate Coordinator, Crop Grouping, IR-4 Project, NJ Agricultural
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Noreen Walsh, Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6
Matt Kales, Senior Advisor for Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation, U.S. Fish and
Wildlife Service, Region 6
Mike Gregg, Land Management and Research Demonstration Biologist, U.S. Fish and
Wildlife Service