

Legislative Update

- Washington DC (August 4, 2007) – The House passed a wide-ranging energy bill on Saturday that will require most utilities to produce 15 percent of their electricity from renewable sources like wind and solar power. President Bush has vowed to veto the energy bill because it does nothing to encourage increased domestic production of oil and gas. The Energy Efficiency through Trees legislation crafted by Rep. Doris O. Matsui was not introduced.
- Edith Makra, Community Trees Advocate for the Morton Arboretum has distributed the following request:

Please contact your US senators regarding urban forestry assistance. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) introduced the Emerald Ash Borer Municipality Assistance Act of 2007 in response to requests for support from Illinois municipalities in the path of EAB. Senate cosponsors include Senators Barack Obama, IL; Richard Lugar, IN; Carl Levin, MI; Debbie Stabenow, MI; Benjamin Cardin, MD; Sherrod Brown, OH; Robert Casey, Jr., PA.

This bill, # S.1717, requires the secretary of agriculture, acting through the deputy chief of State and Private Forestry, to provide loans to eligible units of local government to finance contracts and purchases of authorized equipment to monitor, remove, dispose of, and replace infested trees that are located on land under the jurisdiction of the eligible units of local government and within the borders of quarantine areas infested by the emerald ash borer, and for other purposes.

Those of you in states where EAB hasn't yet been found may not realize there will not likely be state or federal grants available to help you manage EAB. A dedicated loan program, managed through the USFS State & Private Forestry program is going to be a very important resource for communities. Note, the sponsorship reflects most currently infested states. Broader support from states in the path of EAB is needed. Senators serving on the Agriculture Committee especially need to hear from you. Let your senators know you are concerned about EAB and need help being prepared and eventually managing it when you find it. Please forward to urban forestry supporters in your state.

- In response to federal guidelines advising that non-profit organizations adopt a "whistleblower" policy, the WAA board of directors adopted such a policy at the August board meeting. The new policy will soon be available to view on the WAA Web site.