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## Financial Relief for Landowners to Fight Cogongrass

Financial relief will soon be available to assist Alabama landowners adversely affected by the non-native, invasive noxious weed, cogongrass. Administered by the Alabama Forestry Commission, the Cogongrass Mitigation Program is made possible through a grant from the USDA Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Plant Protection & Quarantine (PPQ). The goals of this program are to reduce the number of infested acres, eliminate cogongrass's damaging effects on existing ecosystems, and improve the productivity of impacted sites. Additional objectives include slowing the spread of current establishments of cogongrass and preventing introductions into new areas of the state.

The program application period will launch on February 14, 2022, and the portal will remain open until further notice, depending on the number of applications. Eligibility for the funding requires that applicants be private, non-industrial landowners. Property with cogongrass infestations must be located in any of the 67 counties of Alabama, although the landowner is not required to reside on the property or within the state. There is no minimum or maximum acreage ownership requirement to enroll. It is a cost-free program.

"Cogongrass is a harmful invasive species that has been spreading across Alabama's native vegetation. I am pleased that this program seeks to assist landowners in mitigating the damaging effects that cogongrass has inflicted on public and private land in Alabama. I encourage all interested and eligible Alabamians to participate in this initiative," said U.S. Senator Richard Shelby (R-Ala.).

"We're very thankful to be able to provide this monetary relief to Alabama landowners in the battle against cogongrass," stated State Forester Rick Oates. "We certainly appreciate the dedication of Senator Richard Shelby and his staff in bringing this program to fruition."

To apply for this funding or for further information regarding additional eligibility requirements, please visit the Cogongrass Mitigation Program section of the Alabama Forestry Commission's website at [www.forestry.alabama.gov](http://www.forestry.alabama.gov), email Owen Andrews at [cogongrass@forestry.alabama.gov](mailto:cogongrass@forestry.alabama.gov), or contact your local AFC office.

The mission of the Alabama Forestry Commission is to protect and sustain Alabama's forest resources using professionally applied stewardship principles and education, ensuring that the state's forests contribute to abundant timber and wildlife, clean air and water, and a healthy economy. For more information about the Alabama Forestry Commission, visit the AFC website at [www.forestry.alabama.gov](http://www.forestry.alabama.gov)

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