



MAPLE SPRINGS VINEYARD

October 17, 2017

To Members of the Pennsylvania House and Senate Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee:

Our Vineyard, Maple Springs Vineyard, is located at the epicenter of the spotted lantern fly quarantine area in Bechtelsville, Berks County. Three years ago, when informed of the insects' arrival, we found a few here and there and banded our Ailanthus trees (Tree of Heaven) with fly paper. The Department of Agriculture, Penn State and Kutztown scientists were welcome to study the insect on our farm. We had heard that the pest destroyed the table grape industry in South Korea and anxiously awaited guidance and help on controlling this population.

By the next year, we were part of a program to turn the Tree of Heaven into bait trees by applying products to the trunk of the trees where the spotted lantern fly feeds. Despite the many dead insects below these trees and our efforts to find and eradicate egg sacks, we were finding 100's at a time in the Vineyard.

This year and right now, as you can see in the attached photos, we have 100's of thousands spotted lantern flies feeding on the trunks of our vines and leaving a film on the leaves of the vine that prevents photosynthesis. Now the spotted lantern fly has consumed a neighboring apple orchard. The drastic escalation in the number of these insects are causing them to be less selective. This is no longer a farmers' problem and the pest does not know the boundary lines of a quarantine. Homeowners in an ever-expanding radius are losing trees, houses are covered. More frightening are gas stations and retail parking lots where cars and 18 wheelers are traveling far and wide from the quarantine area, spotted lantern flies are hitching rides in large populations. Once thought not to fly, only hop, the flies are swarming the sky, clustering on telephone poles and any sunny spot. There is not an identified predator to naturally control this population.

This is not our problem any more, this is OUR problem. This infestation is getting way ahead of us and harder to stop every day. This issue is not going away by pretending it's not getting worse. It is time for action, the public needs to be aware and I beg you to act on providing the funds and support to the scientific community to come up with a plan to mitigate the spotted lantern fly.

We welcome you to our Vineyard to see this problem first hand, and the surrounding gas stations, homes, and shopping malls. Talk to the many whose property and livelihood is being impacted by this infestation and imagine the rate that the population is increasing and the rate the impacted areas are spreading.

Sincerely,

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