

## Clarify the Role of Invasive Species

In the past, policies addressing problem plants and animals followed a rational path: They focused on controlling organisms that posed serious threats to agricultural crops and other valued American plants and animals as well as public health. However, the issue associated with so-called invasive species is moving in a new direction, leading to an almost religious crusade to rid the nation of all “non-native” plants and animals. Despite claims to the contrary, many non-native species provide valuable public benefits. Wholesale eradication, instead of management, promises to cause more problems than it would solve. It would result in wasted taxpayer dollars and reduced access to many valuable plant and animal products. In addition, these policies

are likely to expand federal land use regulations, undermining the constitutional right to property.

- Policy makers in Congress and in the administration should focus on developing a scientifically sound definition of invasive species—one that focuses on harmful and noxious characteristics rather than on country of origin.
- In addition, lawmakers should include language in all legislation involving this issue stating that all affected landowners will receive compensation for any economic costs placed on them to meet any invasive species regulations.

*Angela Logomasini and Robert J. Smith*