



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Marketing and
Regulatory
Programs

Washington, DC
20250

June 24, 2024

Mr. Scott Black
Executive Director
The Xerces Society
1631 Northeast Broadway Street, #821
Portland, OR 97232
scott.black@xerces.org

Dear Mr. Black:

Thank you for your email of May 23, 2024, to Secretary Thomas J. Vilsack, cosigned by your colleagues, regarding the Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program in the Cebolla area of Rio Arriba County, New Mexico. Because our Agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) manages the program, the Secretary asked us to respond.

We appreciate your support for U.S. public lands and the Rio Chama watershed. We have reviewed in detail the points you raise regarding the planned—and subsequently canceled—2023 New Mexico grasshopper treatments. We are satisfied we exercised due diligence in planning and preparing for these activities.

As you may already know, on May 30, 2024, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) conducted this year's final survey in the Cebolla area of Rio Arriba County, New Mexico. APHIS experts determined that there is no need to treat the area this season, because grasshopper population levels are below the eight-per-square-yard baseline threshold.

We continue to evaluate strategies for potential future Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program activities. You can find detailed information about the program on our web page, [USDA APHIS| Frequently Asked Questions About Grasshoppers and Mormon Crickets in Western States](#).

Thank you again for sharing your concerns. Our Agency is committed to being a good steward of the environment. Please share this response with your colleagues who also signed the letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Watson".

Michael Watson
Administrator
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service