



CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN

April 7, 2010

Dear NGO members of the Plant Conservation Alliance,

It is with pleasure that I take this opportunity to introduce myself to the group. I have been the President and CEO of Chicago Botanic Garden for nearly three years and last year I agreed to serve as the Chair of the NGO committee of the Plant Conservation Alliance.

I want to thank Kathryn Kennedy for her leadership of this committee over the past several years and look forward to her continuing input as we move forward. After discussions with several leaders in the PCA network, it became clear that advocacy for plants and their conservation are the key objectives for our NGO committee. Toward that end, we have drafted language for the FY 2011 Interior Appropriations Bill.

Specifically, we are suggesting increased funding for plant conservation and restoration activities for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The language directs the Bureau of Land Management to create a new line item subactivity within the appropriation for "Plant Restoration and Conservation Programs." We chose BLM for our initial efforts because they lead Seeds of Success, our national native seed banking program and because they are the largest of the federal land managing agencies. We envision developing similar campaigns in future years for other agencies.

Attached is a briefing paper explaining our request that was drafted with input from several PCA members. This is the first step in what we hope will be a successful, long term collaborative effort between all of our organizations to increase federal funding for plants and their conservation. We welcome your comments on this paper.

If you are willing to support the recommendations, the next step is for you to contact your United States Senators and Representatives and ask that they support this request.

In order to be considered in the FY 2011 budget process, you will need to make these contacts as soon as possible. We have appended a sample letter that you are welcome to use as a template. In the event you are asked this is NOT an earmark request – it is report language and a programmatic request. Congressman Mark S. Kirk (IL 10) has already agreed to make this request.

I would welcome your suggestions for future actions for this committee, as well as suggestions about how we can work together more effectively. Do you prefer regular email communications? Should we meet at an annual or biennial PCA conference? What would



CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN

you like this committee to accomplish? Please send your suggestions or questions on how to contact your elected officials to Kayri Havens, the Chicago Botanic Garden's Co-Director of Plant Conservation. She is helping me with this effort. Her contact information is as follows: (khavens@chicagobotanic.org or 847-835-8378).

I look forward to working with all of you on the crucial task of conserving our nation's plant diversity.

Sincerely,

Sophia Siskel
President and CEO
Chicago Botanic Garden
Chair, Plant Conservation Alliance NGO committee

Attachment