

Date: May 24, 2017

From: Gerry Bates  
South Idaho Community Forestry Assistant  
Idaho Community Forestry Program

To: Idaho Lawmakers  
Idaho State Department of Agriculture

To Whom It May Concern;

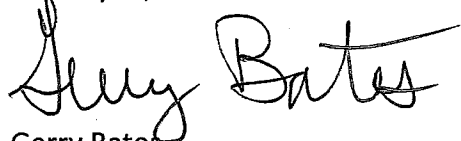
For the past twenty years, I have contracted with the Idaho Department of Lands to provide services to Southern Idaho Cities and Counties intended to assist in the development of sustainable Community Forestry programs. My area of responsibility lies in all parts of Idaho located south of the Salmon River and includes cities located in the wildland/urban interface, rural areas and densely populated urban cities.

As an International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist, and an Idaho Certified Nursery Professional, I am concerned about the effort to list *Taxus* species (Yews) as noxious weeds. My wife and I previously owned a garden center and landscape business in Idaho Falls and found *Taxus* to be a very important plant for landscape use in urban areas. It's a plant whose cultivars grow into various heights and spreads. It's also an evergreen that thrives in the shade making it useful on northern exposures where other evergreen plants won't grow.

I understand that *Taxus* is poisonous and that wildlife consumption of the plant can lead to undesirable consequences. Reasonably, use of the *Taxus* species should be restricted in areas where foraging of elk and deer is likely to occur. The City of Ketchum recently passed a City Ordinance restricting the use of the plant. I support localized regulation of the plant, it seems more reasonable that imposing a statewide restriction on a plant with positive uses in urban landscapes.

I'm certain that common ground can be found between the parties involved in this issue, short of a statewide ban. The very vocal opinion of an extremely small group of Idaho Citizens shouldn't affect the ability to locate this plant in appropriate planting locations.

Thank you,



Gerry Bates  
South Idaho Community Forester  
Idaho Community Forestry Program  
2445 John Adams Parkway  
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401