

DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
Title 3 of the California Code of Regulation Section 3289 Guava Root-Knot Nematode
Exterior Quarantine

**Notice of Proposed Rulemaking
45 – Day Notice**

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (Department) proposes to amend Title 3, California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 3289 Guava Root-Knot Nematode Exterior Quarantine, which will allow the Department to add Puerto Rico to the guava root-knot nematode exterior quarantine which will help prevent the spread of guava root-knot nematode (*Meloidogyne enterolobii*) to California.

PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing is not scheduled. However, a public hearing will be held if any interested person, or his or her duly authorized representative, submits a written request for a public hearing to the Department no later than 15 days prior to the close of the written comment period.

WRITTEN COMMENT PERIOD

Any interested person or his or her authorized representative may submit written comments relevant to the proposed regulations to the Department. Comments may be submitted by USPS, FAX or email. The written comment period closes September 21, 2026. The Department will consider only comments received at the Department offices by that date or postmarked no later than September 21, 2026. Submit comments to:

Erin Lovig, Senior Environmental Scientist Supervisor
California Department of Food and Agriculture Plant Health and
Pest Prevention Services
1220 N St,
Sacramento, CA 95814
916.403.6650
Permits@cdfa.ca.gov

Questions regarding the substance of the proposed regulation should be directed to Erin Lovig. In her absence, you may contact Rachel Avila at (916) 698-2947 or rachel.avila@cdfa.ca.gov.

Unless there are substantial changes to the proposed regulations prior to adoption, the Department of Food and Agriculture may adopt the proposal as set forth in this notice without further notice to the public. Following the public hearing, if one is requested, or following the written comment period if none is requested, the Department, at its own motion, or at the instance of any interested person, may adopt the proposal substantially as set forth without further notice.

AUTHORITY

The Department proposes to amend Section 3289 pursuant to the authority vested by Sections 407, 5301, and 5302 of the Food and Agricultural Code (FAC).

REFERENCE

The Department proposes this action to implement, interpret and make specific Sections 5301 and 5302 of the FAC.

INFORMATIVE DIGEST/POLICY STATEMENT OVERVIEW

The specific purpose of amending the Guava Root-Knot Nematode Exterior Quarantine is to provide authority to the State to establish Puerto Rico as an area under the guava root-knot nematode, *Meloidogyne enterolobii*, also known as *M. mayaguensis*, exterior quarantine. This amendment will provide authority for the State to perform specific detection and exclusion activities against the guava root-knot nematode if found within host material coming from Puerto Rico. This authority includes restricting entry and requiring certifications.

EXISTING LAWS & REGULATIONS

Existing law, FAC Section 407, provides that the Secretary may adopt such regulations as are reasonably necessary to carry out the provisions of this code which the Secretary is directed or authorized to administer or enforce.

Existing law, FAC Section 5301, provides that the Secretary may establish, maintain, and enforce such quarantine regulations as they deem necessary to protect the agricultural industry of this state from pests. The regulations may establish a quarantine at the boundaries of this state or elsewhere within the state.

Existing law, FAC Section 5302, provides that the Secretary may make and enforce such regulations as they deem necessary to prevent any plant or thing which is, or is liable to be, infested or infected by, or which might act as a carrier of, any pest, from passing over any quarantine line which is established and proclaimed pursuant to this division.

ANTICIPATED BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT

The implementation of these regulations prevent the introduction of guava root-knot nematode from interstate travel and shipping. Following these regulations will help prevent the spread of pests within California, which will prevent:

- direct damage to the agricultural industry growing host material

- indirect damage to the agricultural industry growing host due to the implementation of quarantines by other countries and loss of export markets
- increased production costs to the affected agricultural industries
- increased pesticide use by the affected agricultural industries
- increased costs to the consumers of host fruits
- increased pesticide use by homeowners and others
- the need to implement a state interior quarantine
- the need to implement a federal domestic quarantine

This amendment is necessary to prevent any future spread of guava root-knot nematode to un-infested areas of the State. The regulation benefits the environment, and the overall California economy by preventing the spread of guava root-knot nematode.

There are economic benefits to the State's general fund from these regulations. Guava root-knot nematode, *Meloidogyne enterolobii*, is considered one of the most important pathogenic nematode species because of its ability to overcome the plant genes that provide resistance to the many other *Meloidogyne* spp. in important crops, thereby causing much greater damage and a substantial reduction in crop yields.

If guava root-knot nematode were allowed to be introduced into California, many agricultural industries would be severely impacted due to decreased yields. There would be rising costs associated with crop rotations, and increased pesticide use. Also, if this pest were introduced, there would be a possible loss of markets if other states or counties established quarantines against California agricultural products due to this pest. Several ornamental and perennial shrub plants are known or probable hosts of the nematode species. Infestations of *M. enterolobii* may lower biodiversity, disrupt natural plant communities, and endanger critical habitats. Home gardening and ornamental plantings may also be impacted. Therefore, it is necessary to amend Section 3289 to prevent any spread of guava root-knot nematode should it be detected within the State.

By adding Puerto Rico to the eradication area we will reduce the chances of future incursions and help maintain the economic baseline.

There are no known specific benefits to worker safety.

There are specific benefits to the health of California residents.

EVALUATION OF INCONSISTENCY / INCOMPATIBILITY WITH EXISTING STATE REGULATIONS

As required by Government Code Section 11346.5(a)(3)(D), the Department has conducted an evaluation of Section 3289 and has determined that they are not inconsistent or incompatible with existing state regulations. After conducting a review for

any regulations that would relate to or affect this area, the Department has concluded that these are the only regulations that concern spongy moth eradication areas in California.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

Prior to conducting any action authorized by this regulation, the Department shall comply with the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et. seq. as amended) and the State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15000 et. seq.).

DISCLOSURES REGARDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

The Department has made the following initial determinations:

Mandate on local agencies or school districts: None.

Cost to any local agency or school district requiring reimbursement pursuant to 17500 et seg: None

Cost or savings to any state agency: None

Other nondiscretionary cost or savings imposed on local agencies: None.

Cost or savings in federal funding to the state: None.

Cost impacts on a representative private person or business: The agency is not aware of any cost impacts that a representative person or business would necessarily incur in reasonable compliance with the proposed action.

Significant, statewide adverse economic impact directly affecting businesses, including the ability of California businesses to compete with businesses in other states: The cost impacts are expected to be none and minimal/non-consequential. The Department makes the initial determination that the proposed action will not have a significant, statewide adverse economic impact.

Significant effect on housing costs: None

Small business determination: The proposed action will not affect small business because compliance activities are currently being performed by existing staff throughout quarantine areas within the State without any impact on small business.

RESULTS OF THE ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS / ASSESSMENT

The Department has made an assessment that the amendment to this regulation would: (1) not create or eliminate jobs in the state of California, (2) not create new businesses or eliminate existing businesses in the state of California, (3) not affect the expansion of businesses currently doing business in the state of California, (4) benefit the health and welfare of California residents, (5) benefit the state's environment, and (6) not expected to benefit workers' safety.

The health and welfare of California residents: The proposed action will benefit the health and welfare of California residents by preventing the establishment of a pest that could spread into the local environment via the surrounding non-agricultural ecosystems. Infestations lead to increased costs to the consumers of host materials and increased pesticide usage.

The state's environment: The proposed action will benefit the environment as preventing the establishment of a pest lowers the risk that the pests could spread into the local environment via the surrounding non-agricultural ecosystems.

CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES

The Department must determine that no reasonable alternative it considered or that has otherwise been identified and brought to its attention would be more effective in carrying out the purpose for which the action is proposed, would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons than the proposed action, or would be more cost-effective to affected private persons and equally effective in implementing the statutory policy or other provision of law.

The Department invites interested persons to present alternatives during the written comment period.

AVAILABILITY OF STATEMENT OF REASONS, TEXT OF PROPOSED REGULATIONS, AND RULEMAKING FILE

The Department has prepared an initial statement of reasons for the proposed action, and has made available all the information upon which its proposal is based and the express terms of the proposed action. The Department has posted the information regarding this proposed regulatory action on its Internet website (www.cdffa.ca.gov/plant/Regulations.html). A copy of the initial statement of reasons and the proposed regulations in underline and strikeout form may be obtained upon request. The location of the information on which the proposal is based may also be obtained upon request. In addition, the final statement of reasons will be available upon request. Requests should be directed to the contact named herein.

AVAILABILITY OF CHANGED OR MODIFIED TEXT

After the comment period and considering all timely and relevant comments received, the Department may adopt the proposed regulations substantially as described in this notice. If the Department makes modifications which are sufficiently related to the originally proposed text, it will make the modified text (with the changes clearly indicated) available to the public for at least 15 days before the Department adopts the regulations as revised. Any person interested may obtain a copy of said regulations prior to the date of adoption

by contacting the agency officer named herein. The Department will accept written comments on the modified regulations for 15 days after the date on which they are made available.

AVAILABILITY OF THE FINAL STATEMENT OF REASONS

Upon its completion, copies of the Final Statement of Reasons may be obtained by contacting the agency officer named herein.