



## UNIVERSITY of NEW HAMPSHIRE

January 1, 2017

### *MIPAG seeks unprecedented ban on a highly profitable commercialized fruit crop – make your voice heard!*

#### **What is happening**

The Massachusetts Invasive Plant Advisory Group (MIPAG) has voted to designate a locally-produced species of kiwifruit (*Actinidia arguta*; a.k.a. the kiwiberri) as "likely invasive" in the state and has petitioned, on questionable grounds, to have it added to the MA Department of Agricultural Resources's (MDAR's) statewide prohibited plant list. Such an unprecedented listing of a commercialized fruit crop will:

- Prohibit MA farmers from growing kiwiberries, a low input perennial specialty crop with a profit value exceeding \$20,000/acre; and
- Deny MA residents the ability to buy kiwiberries from their grocery stores and farmers' markets, even if the berries are produced out of state

Much of the evidence provided by MIPAG in this case is anecdotal or speculative; and in many instances, the claims are false. In general, the petition disregards the nearly 140 year history of the species in the region and seeks to portray abandoned historic plantings as invasions into second growth forests that are arguably younger than the vines themselves. If passed, it is reasonable to expect other states in the northeast to adopt similar measures, citing the MDAR decision as evidence.

#### **Call to Action**

Do not let MIPAG impose restrictions on agricultural producers and consumers in the absence of robust evidence. If at all possible, please speak up in person at MDAR's January 10 public comment period (see next page for details). Alternatively, before the **January 10 deadline (5 PM)** for written public comments, please email Taryn LaScola ([Taryn.LaScola@state.ma.us](mailto:Taryn.LaScola@state.ma.us)) and request that MDAR not include the kiwiberri on its list of prohibited plants:

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your time,

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# THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS



## Department of Agricultural Resources

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### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES ("MDAR") HEREBY GIVES NOTICE OF A GENERAL HEARING, PURSUANT TO M.G.L.C.128, SECTION 27, which requires the Commissioner of MDAR to hold a public hearing when prohibiting the delivery within the Commonwealth nursery stock, fruits, plants, and parts thereof from outside the Commonwealth. The purpose of this public hearing is to allow the public to comment on the addition of the following plants to MDAR's prohibited plant list, which identifies those plants that are restricted and/or prohibited from entry into the Commonwealth:

Actinidia argute (Hardy kiwi)  
Butomus umbellatus (Flowering rush)  
Salix atrocinera (Large gray willow)  
Salix cinera (Rusty willow)

All persons desiring to provide oral testimony are hereby notified to appear upon the following date and time at the respective designated location:

Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Richard Cronin Building, Room 110, Westborough, MA for a public hearing to be held on January 10, 2017, at 10:00 am.

\*Please note that the Richard Cronin Building is a state office building and all visitors to need to check in at the reception desk when they arrive and sign out again before they leave.

In addition to oral testimony, written comments will be accepted before and at the Hearing. MDAR will continue to accept written comments until January 10, 2017 at 5:00 pm. Written comments should be addressed to Taryn LaScola, Director, Division of Crop and Pest Services, Department of Agricultural Resources, 251 Causeway Street, Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114.

A hard copy of the background information on the above listed plants may be made available upon request.

By: John Lebeaux, Commissioner