



Information for Submitters – APP203336

Have your say on an application submitted under section 34 of the HSNO Act (1996)

Introduction

The Brown Marmorated Stink Bug Council has submitted an application to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) seeking approval under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act (HSNO Act) to import and release the parasitoid wasp *Trissolcus japonicus* as a biocontrol agent in the event of a brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB, *Halyomorpha halys*) incursion to New Zealand. The application will be processed by the EPA through a publicly notified pathway.

This document provides information to help you understand the application, the HSNO Act process for considering the application, and how you can participate in that process.

What is the application for?

The background and aims of the application include a truncated summary taken from the application form.

Background and aims of introducing *Trissolcus japonicus* in New Zealand

Brown marmorated stink bug is believed to be one of the highest risk biosecurity threats currently facing New Zealand, with frequent interceptions at the border. BMSB threatens an extensive range of New Zealand's commercial and amenity plant species, and establishment here would likely result in significant social and economic impacts.

The goal of the application is to increase New Zealand's preparedness for this biosecurity threat by providing a tool that could be used; (1) in a biosecurity response if a BMSB incursion is detected in New Zealand, and (2) as a classical biocontrol against BMSB in New Zealand should this pest establish here.

Current surveillance and control tools for this pest are very limited, making eradication and long-term management extremely challenging. There has never been successful eradication of an invasive BMSB population, in part due to the lack of effective tools. Should BMSB establish, biological control by natural enemies is likely to be the most effective long-term, sustainable and socially acceptable means of control. The alternative, as has been seen overseas, is increased use of insecticides.

As BMSB is considered unlikely to be controlled by any natural enemies already present in New Zealand a new natural enemy would need to be introduced to achieve biological control of the pest. *Trissolcus japonicus* (also known as the Samurai Wasp) is a small parasitoid wasp that is harmless to humans but

attacks and kills the eggs of BMSB. The wasp is an important natural enemy of BMSB in Asia, the region of origin of both species. *Trissolcus japonicus* is regarded in the USA and Europe as the primary candidate for biocontrol of BMSB.

This application is to seek official approval for the importation and release of *T. japonicus* into the New Zealand environment. The trigger point for considering release would be detection of a BMSB incursion or an established population. *Trissolcus japonicus* would likely be imported from overseas laboratory populations for release into the area where BMSB has been detected. Rapid release of large numbers of *T. japonicus* at the early phase of the BMSB incursion would be a critical component of an attempted eradication effort. If eradication was not successful, early release and subsequent establishment of self-sustaining populations of the parasitoid would act to deliver a classical biocontrol programme against BMSB in New Zealand. This would reduce the likelihood of large populations of BMSB developing in the absence of effective natural enemies. The need for early release of the parasitoid is the reason for this pre-emptive application before BMSB arrives.

The use of *T. japonicus* is subject to the arrival of BMSB. If this application is approved, the EPA would place a control on the approval, stipulating that *T. japonicus* may only be released when a BMSB incursion is detected in New Zealand. Additional controls may be required to allow the use of *T. japonicus* in an eradication response.

The key potential positive and negative effects will be evaluated and reviewed in the EPA Staff Assessment Report that is expected to be released on 22 June 2018.

Where to find the application

The application can be found on the EPA website (www.epa.govt.nz).

You can also contact the applicant directly if you have questions about the information in the application.

Richard Palmer can be contacted by email (Richard.Palmer@hortnz.co.nz) or phone (04 472 3795).

You can contact the EPA if you have any questions about the application process, making submissions, or the hearing process. The application leader is Clark Ehlers, who can be contacted by email

(clark.ehlers@epa.govt.nz) or phone (04 474 5495).

The application process

The application process is set out in the HSNO Act, including timeframes within which steps of the process must occur. The main steps are set out below.

Stage of process	Date
Application formally submitted to EPA	26 March 2018
Public submission period	11 April to 24 May 2018 This period has been extended to 31 May 2018.
EPA Staff Assessment Report release	Expected 22 June 2018*
Public hearing (open to the public, applicant and submitters can present), if a hearing is held	Expected to take place on or before 6 July 2018*
Consideration of application (not open to the public)	Expected to take place on or before 6 July 2018*
Decision released	Prior to 17 August 2018*

*These stages of the process may occur up to one week later due to the extension of the public submission period.

Who considers the application?

The application is considered by a sub-committee of the EPA's HSNO Committee. The HSNO Committee consists of eight members, appointed by the EPA Board, with delegated decision-making powers to consider certain applications made under the HSNO Act.

The Decision-making Committee for this application has not yet been appointed.

The role of EPA staff

EPA staff support the Decision-making Committee, and administer the consideration process including the submissions and hearing.

EPA staff also provide advice to the Decision-making Committee. Following the close of submissions, EPA staff will complete a full assessment of the matters to be considered, using the information in the application, from submitters and other readily available sources. This Staff Assessment Report will be published on the EPA website and will assist the Decision-making Committee with the consideration of the application.

Information the Decision-making Committee will take into account

Sources of information for the Decision-making Committee include, but are not limited to:

- the application form and supporting documents

-
- submissions
 - EPA Staff Assessment Report
 - information presented at a public hearing (if a hearing is held).

All written reports, submissions, the application, and decision will be available on the EPA website as they become available.

The statutory criteria for considering this application

In considering the application, the Decision-making Committee must take into account a range of matters set out in the HSNO Act.

Undesirable self-sustaining populations

The Decision-making Committee is required to consider the potential for *T. japonicus* to establish an undesirable self-sustaining population, and the potential for eradication of an undesirable population of the parasitoid.

The Decision-making Committee is interested in any information about a situation where a population of *T. japonicus* might be considered undesirable.

Minimum standards

The HSNO Act sets out minimum standards that must be met in order for a new organism to be released.

This means that *T. japonicus* cannot be approved for release if it is likely to:

- cause any significant displacement of any native species within its natural habitat
- cause any significant deterioration of natural habitats
- cause any significant adverse effects on human health and safety
- cause any significant adverse effect to New Zealand's inherent genetic diversity
- cause disease, be parasitic, or become a vector for human, animal, or plant disease, unless the purpose of that importation or release is to import or release an organism to cause disease, be parasitic, or a vector for disease.

The Decision-making Committee is interested in any information about whether *T. japonicus* meets the minimum standards.

Adverse and beneficial effects

The Decision-making Committee is required to weigh the potential beneficial (positive) effects against the potential adverse effects of releasing *T. japonicus* into the New Zealand environment.

If the adverse effects outweigh the beneficial effects, the organism cannot be released.

The Decision-making Committee is interested in any information about benefits or adverse effects that could result from the release *T. japonicus*, in particular, any effects on the environment, human health and safety, the market economy, Māori culture and traditions, and society and communities.

You can participate in the process

Make a submission

Any person can make a submission on this application, provided it is submitted within the submission period (**11 April to 31 May 2018**). In a submission you can provide information, make comments and raise issues. In this way, you contribute to the EPA decision-making process on this application.

Further information on the purpose of submissions is available from the EPA website using the link below:

<https://www.epa.govt.nz/public-consultations/>

In your submission, you can also request a hearing if you would like to speak to your views in person before the Decision-making Committee. Further information on what to expect at a hearing can be found in the link below:

<https://www.epa.govt.nz/public-consultations/what-to-expect-at-a-hearing/>

The EPA website provides guidance and steps on how to make a submission. This is preferably done via the EPA submission form online, but may be sent as a letter or e-mail to the EPA. This information and the submission form can be accessed from the EPA website using the link below:

<https://www.epa.govt.nz/public-consultations/how-to-make-a-submission/>

Participate in the public hearing

A hearing may be held to enable submitters to speak to the Decision-making Committee about their submissions.

You are entitled to bring witnesses who may speak to your submission at a hearing. If you choose this option, you should provide the EPA with a list of the witnesses, their areas of expertise, and the elements of the submission or application they will talk to.

If you choose to speak at a hearing, you are entitled to speak in one of the three official languages of New Zealand: English, Māori, or New Zealand Sign Language. Please advise the application lead **at least two weeks prior to the hearing start date if you wish to speak to your submission in Māori or New Zealand Sign Language** in order for the EPA to organise for an interpreter. The application lead, Clark Ehlers, can be contacted by e-mail (Clark.Ehlers@epa.govt.nz) or by phone (04 474 5495).

Both the applicant and submitter(s) need to provide the EPA with copies of any information they intend to present at the hearing at least two weeks prior to the hearing.