



**PUTNAM COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
KEVIN M. BYRNE**

August 27, 2025

Richard Ball  
Commissioner  
New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets  
10B Airline Drive  
Albany, New York 12235

Dear Commissioner Ball:

As you know, the spotted lanternfly (SLF) is an invasive species that has taken root in Putnam County. Anecdotal evidence from across our community indicates SLF population size has increased in Putnam County since the species first arrived in New York State in 2020. This is alarming, not only for our Hudson Valley plant species, including grapevines, threatened with fungal diseases as a result of contact with the insects, but local residents plagued by seemingly growing numbers of SLF in their gardens, yards, and farms.

As you are aware, SLFs can currently be found in 29 counties of New York State, with no sign of their spread slowing in the short and medium terms. Clearly, mitigation efforts have stalled or failed. Their favorite flora target, the tree of heaven plant, abuts many of Putnam County's roadways, intensifying the problem and complicating potential mitigation approaches such as regular treatments with insecticide.

In light of these issues, and drawing on the information provided at the recent Department of Agriculture and Markets SLF media availability, I would respectfully request your responses to the following questions:

What is the estimated SLF population size in Putnam County? How does this population size compare to neighboring counties in the lower and mid-Hudson Valley?

Has population size fluctuated or steadily increased since the species was first reported in Putnam County?

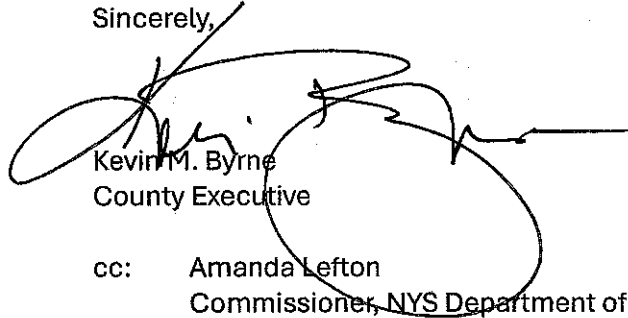
What enhanced mitigation steps is Agriculture and Markets prepared to take apart from education and awareness?

Is biocontrol – that is, the introduction of a predator species known to feed on SLFs – an option being considered at this time? How would this particular method be funded?

With SLF egg-laying season approaching, what additional steps can Agriculture and Markets take to reduce egg masses in Putnam County forestlands, particularly the hardwood-dense sections of the Great Swamp in Patterson?

Thank you for your attention to these concerns. I appreciate your Department's efforts related to this issue and I look forward to working with you in order to maintain a balanced and vibrant local ecosystem. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin M. Byrne', is written over the printed name and title. The signature is stylized with a large loop and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Kevin M. Byrne  
County Executive

cc: Amanda Lefton  
Commissioner, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

Rian Rodriguez, MPH  
Director of Public Health

Putnam County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board  
C/o Putnam County Soil and Water Conservation District

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