

MAR 14 2007

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO DEVELOP A TARO
SECURITY AND PURITY RESEARCH PROGRAM.

1 WHEREAS, invasive species pose constant challenges to
2 Hawaii's agricultural industry as well as the environment, and
3 the ongoing arrival of new invasive species is unpredictable and
4 can have far-reaching effects; and

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6 WHEREAS, taro is prone to the effects of invasive species,
7 particularly plant diseases, including the Alomae/Bobone virus
8 disease complex and taro beetles; and

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10 WHEREAS, due to the Plant Protection Act of 2000, the
11 Department of Agriculture is no longer able to inspect taro from
12 Asia and the Pacific that may carry pests and diseases, which
13 may cause infestation or disease in taro patches in Hawaii; and

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15 WHEREAS, furthermore, Customs and Border Protection under
16 the Department of Homeland Security has replaced United States
17 Department of Agriculture agents, and now conducts inspections
18 of plant products from foreign countries, thus, leaving the
19 passenger and baggage pathways in Hawaii more vulnerable to
20 unwanted plant pests and diseases; and

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22 WHEREAS, scientific methods of protecting taro from
23 invasive species, such as genetic modification has faced
24 tremendous resistance and opposition because taro is sacred to
25 the Native Hawaiians and is an integral part of the Native
26 Hawaiian culture; and

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28 WHEREAS, furthermore, there are concerns regarding the
29 possible health, environmental, economic, and other cultural
30 impacts that genetically modified taro may pose; and

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32 WHEREAS, however, as the debate ensues on genetically
33 modified taro, there are still many lethal insects and diseases



1 of taro that occur in the Pacific that can cause widespread
2 agricultural and financial losses for taro farmers in Hawaii;
3 now, therefore,
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5 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fourth
6 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2007, the
7 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of
8 Agriculture is requested to develop a taro security and purity
9 research program that is designed to ensure that taro can be
10 saved and protected from natural attack; and
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12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
13 collaborate with taro growers and various Native Hawaiian groups
14 to develop and adopt a program that will:
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- 16 (1) Allow the Department of Agriculture's Biosecurity
17 Program to protect crops in Hawaii by inspecting
18 foreign crops upon entrance to the State, and
19 preventing any viruses or insects from entering the
20 State;
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- 22 (2) Allow alternative forms of research on taro other than
23 genetic modification;
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- 25 (3) Provide public outreach, engagement, and education on
26 taro research and protection; and
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- 28 (4) Request the United States Department of Agriculture to
29 have the Alomae/Bobone virus disease complex and taro
30 beetles designated as "actionable pests" in the
31 findings of the United States Department of
32 Agriculture and the Hawaii Department of Agriculture
33 report to prevent entry into Hawaii from foreign
34 countries; and
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36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the purposes of the program
37 will be to:
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- 39 (1) Promote agricultural expansion in Hawaii;
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- 41 (2) Increase public support of locally grown products;
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- 43 (3) Increase public confidence in biotechnology through
44 robust public participation in regulation;



- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture is requested to submit a written report to the Legislature of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, no later than twenty days prior to the 2008 Regular Session; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture; the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture; the Dean of the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources at the University of Hawaii; the President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation; the Chairperson of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs; Hanalei Taro Growers Associations; Kauai Taro Growers Association; Onipa'a Na Hui Kalo.

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Erzanne Chun Oakland

John