

Honolulu, Hawaii

APR 02 2007

RE: S.C.R. No. 206

Honorable Colleen Hanabusa
President of the Senate
Twenty-Fourth State Legislature
Regular Session of 2007
State of Hawaii

Madam:

Your Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture, and Hawaiian Affairs, to which was referred S.C.R. No. 206 entitled:

"SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO DEVELOP A TARO SECURITY AND PURITY RESEARCH PROGRAM, "

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to protect taro grown in Hawaii from lethal insects and diseases that can cause widespread agricultural and financial losses for taro farmers by requesting that the Department of Agriculture develop a taro security and purity research program.

Specifically, this measure requests the Department of Agriculture to collaborate with taro growers and various Native Hawaiian groups to develop a program that will:

- (1) Allow the Department's Biosecurity Program to protect crops in Hawaii by inspecting foreign crops upon entrance to the State;
- (2) Allow alternative forms of research on taro other than genetic modification;
- (3) Provide public outreach, engagement, and education on taro research and protection to increase public participation and confidence; and



- (4) Request that the Alomae/Bobone virus disease complex and taro beetles be designated as actionable pests to prevent entry into Hawaii; and

submit a written report to the Legislature of its findings and recommendations prior to the 2008 Regular Session.

Testimony in support of this measure was submitted by the Department of Agriculture; the University of Hawaii; the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, University of Hawaii; the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation; the Maui County Farm Bureau; the Hawaii Crop Improvement Association; Tropical Hawaiian Products; and the Hawaii Science and Technology Council.


Invasive species pose constant challenges to Hawaii's agricultural industry as well as the environment, and the ongoing arrival of new invasive species is unpredictable and can have far-reaching effects. Taro is prone to the effects of invasive species, particularly plant diseases, including the Alomae/Bobone virus disease complex, and insects, such as taro beetles. Scientific methods of protecting taro from invasive species, such as genetic modification, have faced tremendous resistance and opposition because taro is sacred to the Native Hawaiians and is an integral part of the Native Hawaiian culture.

Your Committee finds that as the debate ensues on genetically modified taro, there are still many lethal insects and diseases of taro that occur in the Pacific that can cause widespread agriculture and financial losses for taro farmers in Hawaii. Your Committee believes that by requesting the Department of Agriculture to collaborate with taro growers and various native Hawaiian groups to develop a taro security and purity research program will ensure that taro can be protected from natural attack, engage the public, and increase public confidence in biotechnology.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture, and Hawaiian Affairs that is attached to this report, your Committee concurs with the intent and purpose of S.C.R. No. 206 and recommends its adoption.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Water, Land,
Agriculture, and Hawaiian
Affairs,



RUSSELL S. KOKUBUN, Chair



The Senate
 Twenty-Fourth Legislature
 State of Hawaii

Record of Votes
Committee on Water, Land, Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs
WAH

Bill / Resolution No.:* <i>SCR 206</i>	Committee Referral: <i>WAH</i>	Date: <i>3/28/07</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> The committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure. If so, then the previous decision was to: _____				
The Recommendation is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended 2312 <input type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments 2311 <input type="checkbox"/> Hold 2310 <input type="checkbox"/> Recommit 2313				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
KOKUBUN, Russell S. (C)	<i>X</i>			
TOKUDA, Jill N. (VC)	<i>X</i>			
FUKUNAGA, Carol				<i>X</i>
HEE, Clayton	<i>X</i>			
SLOM, Sam	<i>X</i>			
TOTAL	<i>4</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>
Recommendation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature: <i>Jill</i>				
Distribution: Original Yellow Pink File with Committee Report Clerk's Office Drafting Agency				

*Only one measure per Record of Votes