
A BILL FOR AN ACT

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR TARO RESEARCH, DOCUMENTATION, AND
OUTREACH FOR THE CONTROL OF THE INVASIVE APPLE SNAIL.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that S.C.R. No. 206,
2 2007, recognized the need to develop a taro security and
3 research program to ensure that taro can be saved and protected
4 from natural attack of pests and diseases.

5 Taro and taro markets are in a state of decline. In
6 addition, the threats that taro farming families and communities
7 face in cultivating taro are numerous and growing. Taro lands
8 in Hawaii represent less than one per cent of all agricultural
9 lands in cultivation in the state, yet it remains the most
10 important traditional cultural crop in Hawaii. Taro production
11 is clearly underfunded.

12 The department of agriculture's preliminary report on the
13 implementation of S.C.R. No. 206 found that the invasive apple
14 snail, Pomacae canaliculata, represents the greatest concern to
15 taro farmers. The apple snail accounts for eighteen to twenty-
16 five per cent of crop losses in recent years.



1 A September 2006 report, entitled "Statewide Strategic
2 Control Plan for Apple Snail (*Pomacea canaliculata*) in Hawaii"
3 and funded by the department of land and natural resources
4 division of aquatic resources, clearly documented the rapid
5 spread of this pest in wetland taro systems, natural wetlands,
6 estuaries, streams, ditches, reservoirs, ponds, and springs on
7 all islands except Molokai and Kahoolawe; provided information
8 on the apple snail's biology and behavior, and past control
9 efforts locally and globally; and documented the negative
10 environmental, agricultural, economic, health-related,
11 educational, and cultural impacts of this invasive species on
12 the taro farming community, the taro market, and the overall
13 natural environment since its arrival in 1983-1984. This report
14 also documented that the State has spent less than \$400,000 on
15 snail control efforts, with little success. The importance of
16 addressing the decline in crop yields due to apple snails
17 continues to increase as Hawaii continued to import more and
18 more taro in 2006 and 2007.

19 One of the recommendations contained in this report as well
20 as the preliminary report on the implementation of S.C.R. No.
21 206 is to provide immediate funding of promising farmer-
22 developed organic snail control compounds and practices. Taro



1 farmers working with Pacific Biodiesel, a local Maui business
2 committed to promoting a clean, sustainable energy future
3 through the production of renewable fuels, discovered and
4 initiated research on an organic conditioner with promising
5 impacts on apple snail mortality. The partnership between the
6 farmers and Pacific Biodiesel has the potential to provide an
7 affordable and ecologically safe solution for farmers, and to
8 create further economic opportunities for the state.
9 Furthermore, Pacific Biodiesel has made a commitment to share
10 intellectual property rights directly with taro farmers. This
11 may provide taro farmers with the potential for self-funded
12 snail control efforts. No other invasive species control
13 efforts or agencies in the state have created such an option.
14 In addition, farmers on Kauai have developed a series of proven
15 organic cover crop rotation taro farming practices over a period
16 of ten years which suppresses snail presence in lo'i (wetland
17 patches). Both of these initiatives occurred without funding,
18 or state or county agency or institutional support.

19 Taro farmers have demonstrated their commitment to the
20 survival of taro and to finding a solution to the apple snail
21 problem despite many hurdles, including the lack of committed
22 funding and institutional support. They have initiated and



1 collaborated on an economic impact study, a statewide strategic
2 control plan, and self-initiated research and practices, and
3 have demonstrated a willingness to participate in the taro
4 purity and security dialogue.

5 The purpose of this Act is to provide funding for:

- 6 (1) Research on the efficacy and environmental effects of
7 the organic soil conditioner being developed by
8 Pacific Biodiesel, which has been shown to be an
9 effective apple snail control;
- 10 (2) Documentation of and outreach for taro farmer-
11 developed organic cover crop control practices on
12 Kauai.

13 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
14 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$500,000 or so much
15 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 for a
16 grant-in-aid to the taro farmer-Pacific Biodiesel partnership to
17 be allocated as follows:

- 18 (1) \$450,000 for Pacific Biodiesel research and
19 development projects;
- 20 (2) \$50,000 for documentation and outreach of Kauai
21 organic cover crop control practices;



1 provided that items (1) and (2) shall be conducted cooperatively
2 with E Kupaku Ka 'Aina - The Hawaii Land Restoration Institute,
3 a state and federal registered 501(c)(3) non-profit entity.

4 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
5 agriculture for the purposes of this Act.

6 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2008.

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INTRODUCED BY:

Mele Carroll

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Report Title:

Taro; Apple Snails; Research

Description:

Provides grants for taro research for the control of the invasive apple snail.

