
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO TARO.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature recognizes the need to develop
2 non-genetic modification based solutions to protect taro from
3 disease and insects on a statewide basis. In senate concurrent
4 resolution no. 206 (2007), the legislature requested the
5 department of agriculture to develop a taro security and purity
6 research program to save and protect taro from natural attack.

7 In 2007, 1,800,000 pounds of taro were imported to Hawai'i.
8 Under current biosecurity rules, the department of agriculture
9 was unable to inspect much of the imported taro to protect
10 existing taro crops in the State.

11 At the same time, taro farmers are struggling with high
12 rates of pest and disease infestation, rising crop and land
13 costs, lack of access to quality water and land resources, a
14 decline in crop cultivar biodiversity, and a decrease in the
15 number of families continuing the taro farming lifestyle. Taro
16 and taro farms are a visual image that is critical to Hawaii's
17 economic vitality in agriculture, tourism, health and wellness,



1 and education and the arts. Taro and taro farms help to sell
2 Hawai'i to the world.

3 The department of agriculture was requested under senate
4 concurrent resolution no. 206 (2007) to collaborate with taro
5 growers and various native Hawaiian groups to develop and adopt
6 a program that would:

- 7 (1) Allow the department of agriculture's biosecurity
8 program to protect crops in Hawai'i by inspecting
9 foreign crops upon entrance to the State, thereby
10 preventing any viruses or insects from entering the
11 State;
- 12 (2) Allow alternative forms of research on taro other than
13 genetic modification;
- 14 (3) Provide public outreach, engagement, and education on
15 taro research and protection; and
- 16 (4) Request the United States Department of Agriculture to
17 have the Alomae/Bobone virus disease complex and taro
18 beetles designated as "actionable pests" in the
19 findings of the United States Department of
20 Agriculture and the Hawai'i department of agriculture
21 report to prevent the entry of these pests into
22 Hawai'i from foreign countries.



1 The department of agriculture initiated a dialogue with
2 taro farmers from each island, researchers and representatives
3 from the University of Hawai'i, the Hawai'i Farm Bureau, and the
4 office of Hawaiian affairs to produce a joint report describing
5 the outcomes and recommendations of the participants. The joint
6 report included proposed legislation that was developed and
7 forwarded to the legislature.

8 One of the primary recommendations of that report was to
9 form a taro security and purity task force in order to guide
10 policy and prioritize research for the protection of taro in
11 Hawai'i.

12 To ensure that the task force would have the full
13 participation of taro farmers who have faced crop hardships for
14 many years without financial assistance and whose resources are
15 limited, the participants recommended that the task force be
16 funded under a legislative appropriation for fiscal year 2008-
17 2009.

18 The purpose of this Act is to establish the taro security
19 and purity task force and appropriate funds out of the general
20 revenues of the State of Hawai'i for the formation and operation
21 of the task force with full participation of taro farmers from
22 all islands.



1 SECTION 2. There is established the taro security and
2 purity task force. For administrative purposes the taro
3 security and purity task force shall be placed within the
4 department of agriculture.

5 SECTION 3. The taro security and purity task force shall
6 consist of the following members or their representatives:

- 7 (1) The department of agriculture;
- 8 (2) The office of Hawaiian affairs;
- 9 (3) The University of Hawai'i; and
- 10 (4) The Hawai'i Farm Bureau Federation.

11 The taro security and purity task force shall also have a
12 minimum of two representatives from the taro farming communities
13 of each of the islands of Kaua'i, O'ahu, Maui, Moloka'i, and
14 Hawai'i and one representative of botanical gardens or taro
15 collections in the State.

16 At no time shall less than fifty per cent of the task force
17 be comprised of taro farmers.

18 The taro security and purity task force members shall serve
19 without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for expenses,
20 including travel expenses, incurred in the performance of the
21 duties of the task force.

22 SECTION 4. The taro security and purity task force shall:



- 1 (1) Develop guidelines, protocols, and recommendations for
2 taro policy, non-genetic modification based taro
3 research, and the allocation of resources to ensure
4 that taro is saved and protected in Hawai'i;
- 5 (2) Develop a program of incentives and projects that have
6 the support of a broad spectrum of taro growers that
7 will enhance taro security, protect taro purity,
8 provide support to taro farms and farmers, and improve
9 taro markets for the long-term;
- 10 (3) Support the recovery of traditional Hawaiian taro
11 cultivars throughout the State; and
- 12 (4) Increase public awareness of the value of taro and its
13 role culturally, socially, in health and well-being,
14 environmentally, and economically in the State.

15 SECTION 5. The members of the taro security and purity
16 task force shall select a chairperson from among its members.

17 SECTION 6. The taro security and purity task force shall
18 meet at times and locations to be determined by its members;
19 provided that the first meeting of the taro security and purity
20 task force shall be no later than three months after the
21 effective date of this Act.



1 SECTION 7. The taro security and purity task force shall
2 submit a written report to the legislature summarizing its
3 program, the results achieved, and recommended legislation no
4 later than twenty days prior to the convening of the 2009
5 regular session.

6 SECTION 8. There is appropriated out of the general
7 revenues of the State of Hawai'i the sum of \$ or so much
8 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 to be
9 allotted as follows:

- 10 (1) \$ for convening and implementing the taro
11 security and purity task force, including conducting
12 discussions on all islands;
- 13 (2) \$ for contracting at least one person to
14 facilitate, coordinate, communicate, and record the
15 work of the taro security and purity task force;
- 16 (3) \$ for archival and ethnographic research of the
17 history of taro and taro practices in Hawai'i and the
18 traditional Hawaiian cultivars to aid in its revival
19 and to revise Bulletin 84: Taro Varieties in Hawai'i
20 (1939) which is the key reference for taro growers and
21 researchers;



1 (4) \$ for protection of the Moloka'i taro varieties
2 collection, the oldest and most complete collection
3 and source of taro varieties in Hawai'i; and

4 (5) \$ for preparing the final report to be
5 submitted to the legislature.

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

8 SECTION 9. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2008.



Report Title:

Taro Security and Purity Task Force; Appropriation

Description:

Creating the taro security and purity task force and appropriating funds for that purpose. (SB2915 SD2)

