

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 20 2008

RE: H.B. No. 3425  
H.D. 2  
S.D. 1

Honorable Colleen Hanabusa  
President of the Senate  
Twenty-Fourth State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2008  
State of Hawaii

Madam:

Your Committee on Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs, to which was referred H.B. No. 3425, H.D. 2, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO TARO,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to provide funding for statewide taro research that focuses specifically on the apple snail problem.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from Department of Agriculture, Department of Land and Natural Resources, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Hawaii County Council, Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, The Nature Conservancy, Hawaii Crop Improvement Association, 'E kupaku ka 'aina, Kaua'i Taro Growers Association, one Hawai'i County councilmember, and four individuals.

Taro and taro markets are in a state of decline. In addition, the threats that taro farming families and communities face in cultivating taro are numerous and growing. Taro lands in Hawaii represent less than one per cent of all agricultural lands in cultivation in the State, yet it remains the most important traditional cultural crop in Hawaii. The invasive apple snail, *pomacae canaliculata*, represents the greatest concern to taro farmers. The apple snail accounted for eighteen to twenty-five per cent of crop losses in recent years. There has been rapid spread of this pest in wetland taro systems, natural wetlands,



estuaries, streams, ditches, reservoirs, ponds, and springs on all islands (except Molokai and Kahoolawe), resulting in negative environmental, agricultural, economic, health-related, educational, and cultural impacts of this invasive species on the taro farming community, the taro market, and the overall natural environment.

Your Committee has amended this measure by deleting its contents and inserting provisions of S.B. No. 2518, a similar measure, that makes an appropriation of \$500,000 for a grant-in-aid to 'E kupaku ka 'aina - The Hawaii Land Restoration Institute to be allocated as follows: (1) \$450,000 for laboratory costs and compensation for taro farmers conducting experiments to improve and protect taro; and (2) \$50,000 for documentation and outreach of Kauai organic cover crop control practices.

Your Committee requests that the Committee on Ways and Means add a proviso to the appropriation to make the expenditure of any funds appropriated contingent upon receiving matching funds from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Agriculture and Hawaiian Affairs that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 3425, H.D. 2, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 3425, H.D. 2, S.D. 1, and be referred to the Committee on Ways and Means.

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



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JILL TOKUDA, Chair



