
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO RAPID OHIA DEATH.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the ohia is Hawaii's
2 most common and widespread native tree. Ohia trees can be found
3 at sea level and up to elevations of twenty-five hundred meters.
4 The trees provide critical habitats for rare and endangered
5 native birds and insects.

6 In recent years, the disease known as rapid ohia death,
7 caused by the non-native fungal pathogen *Ceratocystis fimbriata*,
8 has been killing ohia trees in the forests and residential areas
9 of Puna and Hilo on the island of Hawaii. When infected, the
10 crown of an ohia tree first turns yellow, and then brown within
11 a few days or weeks. The fungal pathogen progresses up the stem
12 of the tree and manifests as a dark staining in the sapwood
13 along the outer margin of the trunk. Landowners have noticed
14 that when healthy-looking trees begin exhibiting symptoms, the
15 trees die in a matter of weeks.

16 As of 2014, approximately fifteen thousand acres on the
17 island of Hawaii have shown greater than fifty per cent



1 mortality from rapid ohia death. Recent estimates have found
2 that the disease has affected thirty thousand acres on the
3 island of Hawaii.

4 The exact transmittal methods of *Ceratocystis fimbriata*
5 have not yet been determined. However, researchers believe that
6 the fungus can be transmitted by feral animals, insects, soil,
7 water, infected cuttings, unsanitized pruning tools, and muddy
8 vehicles. There is no treatment that can protect ohia trees
9 from rapid ohia death and there is no cure for infected trees.

10 The legislature finds that rapid ohia death has the
11 potential to destroy ohia trees statewide. The loss of ohia
12 trees would be catastrophic to the diversity, structure, and
13 function of the State's remaining native forests.

14 Researchers of the United States Department of Agriculture,
15 the University of Hawaii, and other organizations have made
16 progress in combating rapid ohia death, including isolating the
17 fungal pathogen, researching alternative hosts for the pathogen,
18 eliminating other causes for the ohia tree deaths, and making
19 recommendations on preventing the spread of the disease.
20 However, the researchers require additional funding to continue
21 their work.



H.B. NO. 2675

Report Title:

Rapid Ohia Death; Ceratocystis; Trees; Research; Study;
Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds for research to combat rapid ohia death.

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