
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 ohia (*Metrosideros*
2 spp.) is the dominant tree in eighty per cent of all native
3 Hawaii forests. Ohia forests protect the upper reaches of the
4 State's critically important watersheds, which supply fresh
5 water to downstream communities and agriculture. Rapid ohia
6 death is a disease caused by a newly identified fungus and is an
7 extremely serious threat to ohia forests. Rapid ohia death is
8 caused by a species of *Ceratocystis* fungus that may enter the
9 tree through an open wound, and then moves into the trunk and
10 stops water transport. This disease may be spread by various
11 means including wind, tunneling beetles, transfers of infected
12 tree materials, unsanitary forestry equipment, vehicles, and
13 footwear. Where rapid ohia death has killed or is killing ohia
14 overstory trees, non-native plants dominate the understory,
15 reducing their watershed, conservation, and cultural value. The
16 disease currently impacts over fifty-thousand acres of ohia



1 forest on the island of Hawaii. Nearly one hundred per cent of
2 trees will die in already infected areas.

3 The rapid ohia death strategic response plan was formulated
4 in 2016 in response to the potential catastrophic loss in
5 diversity, structure, and function of the State's remaining
6 native forests. The plan identifies critical research needs and
7 management recommendations to address the anticipated ecologic,
8 hydrologic, economic, and cultural devastation caused by the
9 further spread of rapid ohia death across Hawaii island and the
10 rest of the State. Funding is required to execute the
11 priorities of this plan.

12 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to
13 implement the rapid ohia death strategic response plan. Funding
14 will support seven strategic objectives in the areas of
15 containment, early detection, rapid response, outreach, and
16 restoration.

17 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
18 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$3,655,000 or so much
19 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2017-2018 and the
20 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
21 2018-2019 for use as detailed by the rapid ohia death strategic



1 response plan. The appropriation shall be distributed as
2 follows:

3 (1) \$2,390,000 shall be used for twenty-one full-time
4 equivalent (FTE) positions, five post-doctoral fellow
5 positions, two technician positions, and two
6 specialist positions; and

7 (2) \$1,265,000 shall be used for supplies, equipment, and
8 resources needed for research, threat response,
9 response coordination, outreach, and cultural
10 engagement.

11 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
12 of agriculture for the purposes of this Act.

13 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2017.

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INTRODUCED BY:

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Report Title:

Rapid Ohia Death; DOA; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates moneys for implementation of the Rapid Ohia Death Strategic Response Plan.

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