

JAN 26 2022

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the albizia tree is
2 an invasive species that can grow up to one hundred fifty feet
3 tall. The tree adapts to grow in nutrient-deficient soils,
4 produces large quantities of wind-dispersed seeds, and grows at
5 a very rapid rate, gaining up to fifteen feet in height each
6 year. It can very quickly disrupt and replace native ecosystems
7 and can easily take over a cleared area in just a few years.
8 The tree is currently widespread on Kauai, Oahu, Maui, and
9 Hawaii Island, and is also established on Lanai.

10 The legislature further finds that albizia trees have very
11 brittle trunks and limbs that are structurally weak and are
12 prone to "sudden limb shear," a phenomenon in which live
13 branches collapse without warning or apparent cause. These
14 collapses can occur even if the tree appears to be healthy.
15 This phenomenon, combined with the tree's large size and fast
16 growth, gives the tree the potential to cause major damage to
17 property, infrastructure, and even human lives.



1 The dangers posed by albizia trees were made clear in
2 August 2014, when strong winds from tropical storm Iselle
3 toppled thousands of albizia trees in Puna, blocking roads and
4 disrupting power lines. This caused tens of thousands of people
5 to be stranded in Puna for weeks without power and made it
6 difficult for first responders to access people in need of
7 emergency services. Surveys found that much of the storm
8 damage, which was estimated to cost between \$148,000,000 and
9 \$325,00,000, could be attributed to albizia trees.

10 The legislature finds that the State must make a long-term
11 investment of resources now to prevent future natural disasters
12 from being aggravated by albizia trees.

13 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish a tree
14 trimming division within the department of land and natural
15 resources to address the dangers caused by trees such as
16 albizia.

17 SECTION 2. Chapter 171, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
18 amended by adding a new section to part I to be appropriately
19 designated and to read as follows:

20 "§171- Tree trimming division; established. There is
21 established within the department a tree-trimming division,



1 which shall be responsible for the removal, trimming, or
 2 management of trees, including albizia trees, that are located
 3 on department controlled lands and pose a threat to lives,
 4 property, or infrastructure."

5 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
 6 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much
 7 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for the
 8 establishment of a tree trimming division within the department
 9 of land and natural resources, including the establishment of
 10 three full-time equivalent (3.0 FTE) positions; provided that
 11 the tree trimming division shall undertake as its first project
 12 the trimming of albizia trees within the Waiahole Valley
 13 community in the city and county of Honolulu.

14 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
 15 land and natural resources for the purposes of this Act.

16 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

17 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.

18

INTRODUCED BY: 



S.B. NO. 3020

Report Title:

DLNR; Invasive Species; Albizia; Tree Trimming; Waiahole Valley; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes a tree trimming division within the Department of Land and Natural Resources, which shall be responsible for the removal, trimming, or management of trees, including albizia trees, that pose a threat to lives, property, or infrastructure. Appropriates moneys and establishes 3.0 FTE positions for the establishment of the division. Directs the division to undertake as its first project the trimming of albizia trees within Waiahole Valley in the City and County of Honolulu.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

