

Honolulu, Hawaii
, 2024

FEB 15

RE: H.B. No. 2644
H.D. 1

Honorable Scott K. Saiki
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2024
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems, to which was referred H.B. No. 2644 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO LITTLE FIRE ANTS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to appropriate funds to support the Hawaii Ant Lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Land and Natural Resources; Hawai'i Food+ Policy; Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species; Sierra Club of Hawai'i; Hawaii Pest Control Association; Ka Ohana O Na Pua; Hawaii Ant Lab; and seven individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Agriculture and Hawai'i Farm Bureau.

Your Committee finds that little fire ants are an invasive species that are spreading rapidly throughout the State. Your Committee further finds that the Hawaii Ant Lab was established in 2009 to address the overwhelming need for research, advice, and technical assistance to address and eradicate rapidly spreading little fire ant infestations. However, the Hawaii Ant Lab has been struggling to secure sufficient funding to continue its operations. This measure provides additional funding to support



the efforts of the Hawaii Ant Lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Inserting an appropriation amount of \$777,744 and establishing seven full-time equivalent positions to support the Hawaii Ant Lab;
- (2) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 2644, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2644, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Finance.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Agriculture & Food
Systems,



CEDRIC ASUEGA GATES, Chair



