
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO BIOSECURITY.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the absence of a
2 state agricultural inspector and quarantine facility on Molokai
3 leaves the island vulnerable to the introduction and spread of
4 invasive species. The legislature further finds that invasive
5 pests have and will continue to arrive via imported goods,
6 posing a significant risk to Molokai's unique ecosystems and
7 economy. High-risk pathways, such as the importation of plants,
8 planting materials, mulch, used vehicles, and farm equipment,
9 further exacerbate this threat. Notably, invasive species such
10 as little fire ants and coconut rhinoceros beetles have not yet
11 been detected on Molokai.

12 The legislature also finds that there is no state
13 agricultural inspector or island invasive species committee on
14 Lanai. However, community agricultural production on the island
15 is vibrant and growing. To date, Lanai has remained free of
16 many invasive species that are causing devastation across the
17 State, including little fire ants, coconut rhinoceros beetles,



1 and coqui frogs. The legislature additionally finds that like
2 Molokai, Lanai and the State as a whole would benefit immensely
3 from an increased presence by the department of agriculture to
4 provide inspections and other support for agricultural producers
5 and the creation of an island invasive species committee.

6 Furthermore, the legislature finds that on Maui, urgent
7 action and resources are required to combat the increasing
8 threats of little fire ants, coconut rhinoceros beetles, and
9 coqui frogs. To effectively educate the public, implement rapid
10 responses, and carry out timely interventions and control
11 measures, sustained funding is essential. With consistent
12 financial support, it remains possible to reduce the economic,
13 environmental, and social effects of invasive species by
14 appropriating funds to public agencies and private organizations
15 to aggressively treat and monitor little fire ant and coqui frog
16 infestations and conduct rigorous monitoring for coconut
17 rhinoceros beetle sightings.

18 Moreover, the legislature finds that investing in
19 prevention and early detection of invasive species is essential,
20 because it can potentially save tens of millions of dollars in
21 long-term damage and irrecoverable losses. For instance,



1 invasive species like the coconut rhinoceros beetle threaten
2 native and indigenous plants critical to food security and
3 cultural continuity, such as kalo, lo'ulu, mai'a (banana), hala,
4 and ko (sugarcane).

5 In addition, the legislature finds that as an island state,
6 Hawaii has the unique advantage of being able to prevent the
7 spread of invasive species through isolation, allowing non-
8 infected islands to serve as critical repositories for native
9 plants and species threatened by infestations elsewhere. This
10 proactive approach to biosecurity will help safeguard Hawaii's
11 environment, economy, and culture.

12 Therefore, the purpose of this Act is to address critical
13 gaps in Maui county's agricultural biosecurity and the
14 prevention, detection, and control of invasive species in Maui
15 county by appropriating funds for these purposes.

16 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
17 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$3,000,000 or so much
18 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the
19 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
20 2026-2027 for the department of agriculture to prevent and
21 control little fire ant and coconut rhinoceros beetle



1 infestations in Maui county; provided that the funding shall be
2 allocated in the following manner:

3 (1) \$ for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE)
4 plant quarantine inspector I position on Molokai to
5 serve the harbor and airport, including salary and
6 fringe benefits, and for necessary equipment and
7 supplies; and

8 (2) \$ for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE)
9 plant quarantine inspector I position on Lanai to
10 serve the harbor and airport, including salary and
11 fringe benefits, and for necessary equipment and
12 supplies.

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

15 SECTION 3. (a) There is appropriated out of the general
16 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$2,250,000 or so much
17 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the
18 same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year
19 2026-2027 to combat the spread of coqui frogs in Maui county;
20 provided that the funding shall be allocated in the following
21 manner:



(1) \$2,000,000 to the Maui invasive species committee to support education, early detection, response, and control efforts regarding coqui frogs; provided further that this funding may include providing equipment and supplies to residents to treat coqui frog infestations on their properties; and

(2) \$250,000 to establish a Lanai invasive species committee as a sub-branch of the Maui invasive species committee.

(b) The department of agriculture may make grants to or enter into contracts with the Maui invasive species committee to accomplish the purposes of this section.

(c) The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department of agriculture for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

INTRODUCED BY:

JAN 22 2025



H.B. NO. 1237

Report Title:

Biosecurity; Invasive Species; Department of Agriculture; Maui County; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for agricultural biosecurity and the prevention, detection, and control of invasive species in Maui County.

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