

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 13 2025

RE: S.B. No. 658
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Agriculture and Environment, to which was referred S.B. No. 658 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE HAWAII ANT LAB,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to appropriate \$1,000,000 to the Department of Agriculture 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 Agriculture, Department of Land and Natural Resources, Hawaii Ant Lab, Hawaii Invasive Species Council, O'ahu Invasive Species Committee, Hawai'i Farm Bureau, Ka Ohana O Na Pua, Hawai'i Farmers Union United, and six individuals.

Your Committee finds that little fire ants have caused significant disruption and economic damage on Hawaii Island and that little fire ant infestations on Oahu are currently on the rise. 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, reductions in funding for the Hawaii Ant Lab over the years have significantly impacted the Hawaii Ant Lab's research and effectiveness. This measure provides additional support for the Hawaii Ant Lab to



fully fund current staff and add new staff; address the short- and long-term needs to control little fire ants; develop new tools to manage more widespread infestations; and increase extension services to support local farms and industries severely impacted by little fire ants.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Changing the appropriation to an unspecified amount; and
- (2) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Agriculture and Environment that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 658, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 658, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Agriculture and
Environment,



MIKE GABBARD, Chair



