

ACT 4

H.B. NO. 15

A Bill for an Act Relating to the Emergency Environmental Workforce.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The September 11, 2001, tragedy, resulting from terrorist attacks in New York, Virginia, and Pennsylvania, has changed the lives of Americans and the way government responds to acts of terrorism. Today, all levels of government across the nation are facing challenges to meet the needs of all constituents.

The federal government faces the monumental task of developing and implementing America's response to violent acts of terrorism and preparing an extensive network of security and intelligence to meet national and international needs. While New York faces the enormous tasks of rebuilding and restoring disrupted services to

its people, other state and local governments across the nation must deal with the "ripple effect" of a disrupted world economy.

Here in Hawaii, state and county leaders of executive and legislative branches of government have begun to assess the impact of September 11 on the local economy within the context of broader national and international economies. While the visitor industry has been the first segment of our local economy to suffer the effects of decreased leisure travel, other ancillary or related industries have been impacted as well.

Analysis and research are still needed to provide a clearer forecast as to the potential duration and depth of the visitor downturn.

While government assesses the State's long-term needs and continues its efforts to lessen negative economic impacts of activities or undertakings beyond our control, immediate short-term solutions are needed for Hawaii's people being negatively impacted with reduced work schedules or layoffs. Immediate solutions for immediate relief will require unprecedented levels of cooperation between state and local government, and between public and private entities, and bold yet productive proposals.

The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds for the establishment of an emergency environmental workforce for short-term employment for individuals who have lost their jobs because of Hawaii's recent economic downturn. Individuals willing to accept the challenge of a workforce job will assist the efforts to:

- (1) Isolate the spread of dengue fever;
- (2) Eradicate the miconia plant and other invasive plants; and
- (3) Reduce coqui frog and fire ant populations.

SECTION 2. There is established the emergency environmental workforce to be attached to The Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii for administrative purposes. The emergency environmental workforce shall:

- (1) Employ approximately four hundred to four hundred fifty individuals who were terminated from their jobs after the September 11 tragedy as a result of the local economic downturn. The individuals shall be employed as three-month contract employees;
- (2) Deploy contract employees to all island mayors certifying a need for environmental clearance and eradication services to supplement current services being provided for the isolation of dengue fever, the eradication of the miconia plant and other invasive plants, and the reduction of coqui frog and fire ant populations; and
- (3) Coordinate its efforts with the efforts of the invasive species committee on each island.

SECTION 3. The Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii shall:

- (1) Together with the Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit, develop a planning, administration, implementation, and evaluation strategy, including a program duration plan and a budget for contract and administrative expenses for the sum appropriated;
- (2) Consult with private employers with workforces, which have, or which may be, affected by layoffs from the economic downturn as a result of the September 11 tragedy to develop a recruitment and public information plan;
- (3) Develop a strategy for the interviewing and selection of program participants;
- (4) Work with island mayors requesting cleaning and eradication services to administer physical examinations, as may be necessary, to qualifying applicants prior to final contract offers;

- (5) Request that the attorneys employed or retained by the University of Hawaii prepare the necessary employment contracts to meet the objectives of the program on an expedited basis;
- (6) Submit review and assessment reports to the governor, the senate president, and the house speaker every sixty days for the duration of the program; and
- (7) Undertake all other necessary activities for program development and implementation.

SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$1,500,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2001-2002 for the establishment of an emergency environmental workforce to be administered by The Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by The Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

(Approved November 2, 2001.)