

ACT 106

H.B. NO. 297

A Bill for an Act Relating to Mosquito Vector Control.

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

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is the primary mosquito species that is responsible for transmitting human viruses, including Zika and dengue. The legislature further finds that research by the World Mosquito Project indicates that the introduction of *Wolbachia* bacteria into mosquitoes makes the mosquitoes more resistant to infection with pathogens that can cause diseases in humans, including Zika and dengue, and therefore less likely to transmit these diseases to humans. However, while *Wolbachia* bacteria are natural bacteria in some mosquitoes, it is not usually found in the

Aedes aegypti mosquito. Mosquitoes with naturally-occurring *Wolbachia* bacteria are not presently known to exist in the State.

The legislature further finds that the release of *Wolbachia*-carrying *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes and subsequent interbreeding with wild mosquitoes reduce the ability of cumulative mosquito populations to serve as disease vectors without suppressing mosquito populations and, therefore, altering ecosystem balance. Research has also shown that *Wolbachia* is safe for humans, animals, and the environment.

The department of agriculture regulates the importation of animals, including insects, into Hawaii by maintaining lists of conditionally approved animals that require a permit for import into the State, restricted animals that require a permit for both import into the State and possession, and animals that are prohibited entry into the State.

The legislature further finds that protecting the residents of Hawaii from mosquito-borne illnesses such as Zika and dengue viruses warrants further inquiry into the feasibility and safety of importing and releasing mosquitoes with *Wolbachia* bacteria. Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to investigate potential innovative vector control programs by:

- (1) Directing the department of agriculture to review the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito with *Wolbachia* bacteria, including *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes originating from Hawaii stock that could be imported for landscape scale mosquito control, and render a determination for placement of the mosquito on the appropriate animal import list; and
- (2) Directing the departments of agriculture, health, and land and natural resources to collaborate on a report to the legislature that includes recommendations regarding the importation of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito with *Wolbachia* bacteria, including *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes originating from Hawaii stock that could be imported for landscape scale mosquito control, and recommendations for appropriate vector control programs.

SECTION 2. The department of agriculture shall review the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito with *Wolbachia* bacteria, including *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes originating from Hawaii stock that could be imported for landscape scale mosquito control, and render a determination for placement of the mosquito on the appropriate animal import list, pursuant to section 150A-6.2, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

SECTION 3. The departments of agriculture, health, and land and natural resources shall collaborate on a report to the legislature that shall include:

- (1) Findings and recommendations regarding the importation and release of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito with *Wolbachia* bacteria, including *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes originating from Hawaii stock that could be imported for landscape scale mosquito control;
- (2) Determination for the placement of the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito with *Wolbachia* bacteria on the appropriate animal import list pursuant to section 150A-6.2, Hawaii Revised Statutes, and the status of the import list placement process;
- (3) Recommendations, plans, timeline, and implementation costs for a mosquito control program using the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito with *Wolbachia* bacteria, if permitted, and, if not permitted, recommendations for other alternative vector control means; and

- (4) Any other relevant findings, recommendations, and any necessary proposed legislation.

The report shall be submitted to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2020.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

(Approved June 21, 2019.)