

## ACT 147

H.B. NO. 1548

A Bill for an Act Relating to Rapid Ohia Death.

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

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that rapid ohia death has killed hundreds of thousands of native ohia trees and affected more than 135,000 acres of forest on Hawaii island. Ohia is the State's most common tree, comprising eighty per cent of its native forests. Ohia trees provide important habitats for other plants and animals and gather precipitation to recharge island aquifers. Ohia forests have been treasured by native Hawaiians for centuries for both practical uses and art, including hula, where the tree is the kinolau of important Hawaiian gods. The widespread loss of ohia would be catastrophic for Hawaii's culture and native ecosystems. It would reduce the municipal and agricultural water supplies and eliminate important cultural ties to the forest.

The legislature further finds that rapid ohia death is caused by two recently arrived fungi, *Ceratocystis lukuohia* and *Ceratocystis huliohia*. *Ceratocystis lukuohia* has caused more than ninety per cent of the rapid ohia death on Hawaii island. Both species have been found on Kauai.

The legislature finds that these two fungi are released into the environment by boring beetles who are attracted to dead ohia trees. The non-native beetles bore into the wood, releasing dust and spreading disease. Rapid ohia death attacks trees where they have wounds, which may be caused by hooved animals. Additional research is needed to better understand the role of beetles and hooved animals in spreading the disease.

The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to the department of land and natural resources to study and combat rapid ohia death.

**SECTION 2.** There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$750,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2019-2020 to study and combat rapid ohia death in the State.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of land and natural resources for the purposes of this Act.

**SECTION 3.** This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2019.

(Approved June 26, 2019.)