

ACT 192

H.B. NO. 863

A Bill for an Act Relating to Forestry.

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

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that under the Hawaii sustainability initiative, the State has committed to integrated sustainability goals, including increasing the State's climate resiliency, as well as supporting and increasing local food production.

The legislature further finds that numerous sources, both internationally and nationally, have recognized the importance of healthy soil as a critical resource for supplying food security, diverse habitats, water storage, and climate

resiliency. For example, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, nations around the world, and other agencies including the United States Department of Agriculture, celebrated 2015 as the International Year of Soils to highlight the necessity of healthy soil for food security and ecosystem resilience against climate change. Similarly, in recognition of the importance of healthy soil to climate resiliency and food security, many states around the country have launched initiatives to incentivize building soil organic matter and improving soil health.

The legislature also finds that trees have an important function in improving soil health and building climate resiliency for Hawaii's environment, including its agricultural landscapes. The Natural Resources Conservation Service, a division of the United States Department of Agriculture, has identified agroforestry as a unique land management approach that intentionally blends agriculture and forestry to enhance productivity, profitability, and environmental stewardship.

According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the strategic planting of trees in agricultural landscapes may increase crop yield, improve soil health, provide habitat for wildlife, and provide a variety of other benefits.

The division of forestry and wildlife of the department of land and natural resources manages four state tree nurseries that aim to provide high-quality native, endangered, and windbreak trees and plants for the public and department of land and natural resources plantings and reforestation projects.

The legislature further finds that there is a need to build and expand facilities at state tree nurseries.

The legislature further finds that various tree nurseries across the State need new or expanded greenhouses, as well as facilities to sanitize seedlings leaving the nurseries to prevent spread of invasive diseases, including the Waimea-Kamuela state tree nursery meant to service large-scale projects statewide, the Maui, Kauai, and Oahu district nurseries, and the Kauai district mid-elevation rare plant nursery.

The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds for the forest stewardship program to build and expand facilities of the state tree nurseries.

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the funds received by the State of Hawaii from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, Public Law 117-2 (Section 9901), the sum of \$750,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2021-2022 for the purposes of this Act.

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, 2021.

(Approved July 6, 2021.)