

ACT 217

S.B. NO. 1552

A Bill for an Act Relating to Invasive Species.

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

SECTION 1. In accordance with section 9 of article VII of the Hawaii State Constitution and sections 37-91 and 37-93, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the legislature has determined that the appropriations contained in H.B. No. 300, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, C.D. 1,¹ and this Act will cause the state general fund expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2023-2024 to be exceeded by \$1,064,267,367 or 11.0 per

cent. This current declaration takes into account general fund appropriations authorized for fiscal year 2023-2024 in H.B. No. 300, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, C.D. 1,¹ and this Act only. The reasons for exceeding the general fund expenditure ceiling are that:

- (1) The appropriation made in this Act is necessary to serve the public interest; and
- (2) The appropriation made in this Act meets the needs addressed by this Act.

SECTION 2. The legislature finds that little fire ants are an invasive species that are spreading rapidly throughout the State. Little fire ants have a painful sting that can cause long-lasting itchy rashes or welts and also irritate, and sometimes blind, household pets. Additionally, these pests cause significant disruption and economic damage to Hawaii.

The legislature 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. The Hawaii invasive species council and Hawaii department of agriculture provided the majority of funding for the Hawaii ant lab. However, that funding ceased due to budget cuts and the repeal of the agricultural development and food security special fund. The reduction in funding has led to staff having to reduce working hours for parts of 2021 and 2022. While the legislature made a one-time appropriation of \$500,000 in 2022 to address the funding shortfall and help the Hawaii ant lab retain its staff, the funding for the 2023-2024 fiscal year is uncertain.

The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to support the Hawaii ant lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State.

SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$500,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 for LNR402, native resources and fire protection program, to support the Hawaii ant lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State.

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

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.

(Approved July 5, 2023.)

Note

1. Act 164.