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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LITTLE FIRE ANTS.

**BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:**

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that little fire ants are  
2 an invasive species that are spreading rapidly throughout the  
3 State. Little fire ants are yellow-red to light brown in color  
4 and are very small, approximately 1.5 millimeters in length,  
5 making the ants extremely difficult to detect. Little fire ants  
6 move slowly and are easily blown off leaves, plants, and trees.  
7 The ants thrive in damp environments and establish colonies on  
8 the ground and in trees, allowing the ants to easily spread in  
9 Hawaii's humid climate and environment.

10           The legislature additionally finds that little fire ants  
11 deliver a painful sting that can cause rashes or welts that can  
12 last for weeks and cause anaphylactic shock. The ants can get  
13 into houses, beds, furniture, and food. They sting babies and  
14 children, causing extreme pain and discomfort, and cats, dogs,  
15 livestock and other animals have gone blind after repeated  
16 stings in the eye from little fire ants. Additionally, these



1 pests cause significant disruption and economic damage to  
2 Hawaii.

3       The legislature further finds that the Hawaii ant lab was  
4 established in 2009 to address the overwhelming need for  
5 research, advice, and technical assistance to address and  
6 eradicate rapidly spreading little fire ant infestations.  
7 Currently, there are numerous organizations involved in  
8 addressing little fire ants across the State, including the  
9 Hawaii ant lab, pacific cooperative studies unit at the  
10 university of Hawaii at Manoa, Hawaii department of agriculture,  
11 Hawaii invasive species council, and Oahu invasive species  
12 committee. The challenge is that there is no organizational  
13 leader to address the problem. The legislature finds that the  
14 Hawaii ant lab, in collaboration with the department of  
15 agriculture's plant pest and disaster control branch, is best  
16 suited to take the lead in addressing this issue. The Hawaii  
17 ant lab has staff on Hawaii island and Oahu, with the majority  
18 on Hawaii island, where little fire ants were first detected.  
19 The Hawaii ant lab on Oahu currently has only two staff members.

20       As of January 2024, there were forty-nine active sites on  
21 Oahu that were either undergoing treatment; in the long-term



1 monitoring phase, which includes post-treatments and addressing  
2 hotspots; or unmanaged or untreated due to a lack of staffing  
3 and capacity.

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

7 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general  
8 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$777,744 or so much  
9 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 for native  
10 resources and fire protection program (LNR402) to support the  
11 Hawaii ant lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in  
12 the State through:

13 (1) The addition of seven full-time equivalent (7.0 FTE)  
14 positions to the Hawaii ant lab on Oahu to address  
15 infestations on Oahu;

16 (2) Raising public awareness regarding little fire ant  
17 infestations and treatments through community  
18 outreach; and

19 (3) Its operations, including funds for test kit supplies  
20 and treatment supplies.



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

3 SECTION 3. In accordance with section 9 of article VII of  
4 the Hawaii State Constitution and sections 37-91 and 37-93,  
5 Hawaii Revised Statutes, the legislature has determined that the  
6 appropriations contained in H.B. No. , will cause the state  
7 general fund expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2024-2025 to be  
8 exceeded by \$ or per cent. In addition, the  
9 appropriation contained in this Act will cause the general fund  
10 expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2024-2025 to be further  
11 exceeded by \$ or per cent. The combined total  
12 amount of general fund appropriations contained in only these  
13 two Acts will cause the state general fund expenditure ceiling  
14 for fiscal year 2024-2025 to be exceeded by  
15 \$ or per cent. The reasons for exceeding the  
16 general fund expenditure ceiling are that:

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



**1** SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.



**Report Title:**

Little Fire Ants; Hawaii Ant Lab; Appropriation; Expenditure Ceiling

**Description:**

Appropriates funds to support the Hawaii ant lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

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