

MAR 14 2007

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO DEVELOP A TARO
SECURITY AND PURITY RESEARCH PROGRAM.

1 WHEREAS, invasive species pose constant challenges to
2 Hawaii's agricultural industry as well as the environment, and
3 the ongoing arrival of new invasive species is unpredictable and
4 can have far-reaching effects; and

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6 WHEREAS, taro is prone to the effects of invasive species,
7 particularly plant diseases, including the Alomae/Bobone virus
8 disease complex and taro beetles; and

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10 WHEREAS, due to the Plant Protection Act of 2000, the
11 Department of Agriculture is no longer able to inspect taro from
12 Asia and the Pacific that may carry pests and diseases, which
13 may cause infestation or disease in taro patches in Hawaii; and

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15 WHEREAS, furthermore, Customs and Border Protection under
16 the Department of Homeland Security has replaced United States
17 Department of Agriculture agents, and now conducts inspections
18 of plant products from foreign countries, thus, leaving the
19 passenger and baggage pathways in Hawaii more vulnerable to
20 unwanted plant pests and diseases; and

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22 WHEREAS, scientific methods of protecting taro from
23 invasive species, such as genetic modification has faced
24 tremendous resistance and opposition because taro is sacred to
25 the Native Hawaiians and is an integral part of the Native
26 Hawaiian culture; and

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28 WHEREAS, furthermore, there are concerns regarding the
29 possible health, environmental, economic, and other cultural
30 impacts that genetically modified taro may pose; and

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32 WHEREAS, however, as the debate ensues on genetically
33 modified taro, there are still many lethal insects and diseases



1 of taro that occur in the Pacific that can cause widespread
2 agricultural and financial losses for taro farmers in Hawaii;
3 now, therefore,
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5 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-fourth
6 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2007, the
7 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of
8 Agriculture is requested to develop a taro security and purity
9 research program that is designed to ensure that taro can be
10 saved and protected from natural attack; and
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12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
13 collaborate with taro growers and various Native Hawaiian groups
14 to develop and adopt a program that will:
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- 16 (1) Allow the Department of Agriculture's Biosecurity
17 Program to protect crops in Hawaii by inspecting
18 foreign crops upon entrance to the State, and
19 preventing any viruses or insects from entering the
20 State;
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- 22 (2) Allow alternative forms of research on taro other than
23 genetic modification;
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- 25 (3) Provide public outreach, engagement, and education on
26 taro research and protection; and
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- 28 (4) Request the United States Department of Agriculture to
29 have the Alomae/Bobone virus disease complex and taro
30 beetles designated as "actionable pests" in the
31 findings of the United States Department of
32 Agriculture and the Hawaii Department of Agriculture
33 report to prevent entry into Hawaii from foreign
34 countries; and
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36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the purposes of the program
37 will be to:
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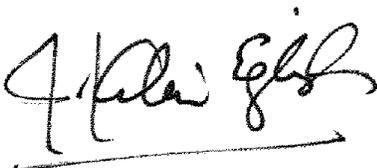
- 39 (1) Promote agricultural expansion in Hawaii;
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- 41 (2) Increase public support of locally grown products;
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- 43 (3) Increase public confidence in biotechnology through
44 robust public participation in regulation;



- 1 (4) Promote active dialogue through all agricultural
- 2 sectors by increasing public and inter-industry
- 3 education;
- 4
- 5 (5) Expand export certification programs from only plants
- 6 to include flowers, fruits, and seeds; and
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- 8 (6) Assist in the continuation of the fruit fly
- 9 suppression program; and

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 11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
 12 is requested to submit a written report to the Legislature of
 13 its findings and recommendations, including any proposed
 14 legislation, no later than twenty days prior to the 2008 Regular
 15 Session; and

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 17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
 18 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the
 19 Board of Agriculture; the Secretary of the United States
 20 Department of Agriculture; the Dean of the College of Tropical
 21 Agriculture and Human Resources at the University of Hawaii; the
 22 President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation; the Chairperson
 23 of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs; Hanalei Taro Growers
 24 Associations; Kauai Taro Growers Association; Onipa'a Na Hui
 25 Kalo.

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