

HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT AUDIT OF THE PLANT QUARANTINE BRANCH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

WHEREAS, introduced or non-native species have and will continue to have devastating impacts on Hawaii's agriculture, natural environment, economy, public health, and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the State's tourism depends upon Hawaii's unique environment; and

WHEREAS, there are more endangered species in the State of Hawaii than in any other state in the United States, and of all the plants and birds known to be extinct in the nation, two-thirds are from Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, core principles of sustainability are: protection of the environment, maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth, and social progress that recognizes all stakeholders' needs; and

WHEREAS, without vigilant inspection, prohibited and restricted insects, diseases, viruses, plants, and animals can be introduced and established in the State, and can endanger the public health, safety, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, once established, invasive species are a matter of serious public concern, causing millions of dollars in damage to agriculture and the environment, and cannot be eradicated; and

WHEREAS, there are increased concerns about the State of Hawaii Department of Agriculture's inability to hire inspectors in a timely manner; and

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WHEREAS, pursuant to section 150A-52, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the Biosecurity Program is designed to prevent the entry into the State and interisland movement of pests and prohibited organisms, as well as eradicate, control, reduce, suppress, seize, and dispose of incipient pest populations and prohibited organisms; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Agriculture has failed to comply with sections 150A-56 and 150A-57, Hawaii Revised Statutes, by failing to submit reports to the Legislature on the status of the Biosecurity Program for fiscal years 2012-2013, 2013-2014, and 2014-2015; and

WHEREAS, members of the agricultural sector, the environmental sector, and the community have expressed concern over the Department of Agriculture's lack of transparency and progress on the implementation of the Biosecurity Program; and

WHEREAS, inspection at the ports is considered the best quarantine measure to reduce the entry of unwanted plants and animals into Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, the community believes that interdicting nonnative species through required inspections at all ports is an important priority; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-eighth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2016, that the Auditor is requested to conduct a financial and management audit of the Plant Quarantine Branch of the Department of Agriculture; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to focus on the current state of the Plant Quarantine Branch and make recommendations on the resources necessary for the Plant Quarantine Branch to fully and properly carry out its purpose and responsibilities pursuant to chapter 150A, Hawaii Revised Statutes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture is requested to provide any information and other assistance the Auditor may require; and

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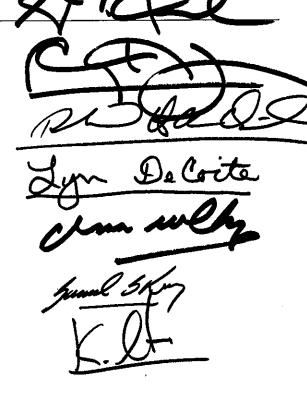
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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Office of the Auditor is requested to report its findings and recommendations to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2017; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Auditor and the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture.

OFFERED BY:



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