
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO RAPID OHIA DEATH.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the ohia is Hawaii's
2 most common and widespread native tree. Ohia trees can be found
3 at sea level and up to elevations of twenty-five hundred meters.
4 The trees provide critical habitats for rare and endangered
5 native birds and insects.

6 In recent years, the disease known as rapid ohia death,
7 caused by the non-native fungal pathogen *Ceratocystis fimbriata*,
8 has been killing ohia trees in the forests and residential areas
9 in Puna, South Hilo, Kau, and South Kona on the island of
10 Hawaii. When infected, the crown of an ohia tree first turns
11 yellow, and then brown within a few days or weeks. The fungal
12 pathogen progresses up the stem of the tree and manifests as a
13 dark staining in the sapwood along the outer margin of the
14 trunk. Landowners have noticed that when healthy-looking trees
15 begin exhibiting symptoms, the trees die in a matter of weeks.

16 Based on recent surveys, approximately fifty thousand acres
17 of ohia forest on the island of Hawaii show signs of rapid ohia



1 death disease. Human movement of infected trees and wood, and
2 contaminated tools, gear, and vehicles are thought to be the
3 main impetus for transmission of the fungus. There is no known
4 treatment that can protect ohia trees from rapid ohia death and
5 there is no cure for infected trees.

6 The legislature finds that rapid ohia death has the
7 potential to destroy ohia trees statewide. The loss of ohia
8 trees would be catastrophic to the diversity, structure, and
9 function of the State's remaining native forests. Currently,
10 the disease has only been found on the island of Hawaii, and
11 active monitoring and attempts to contain the disease are
12 necessary to prevent the disease from reaching other islands.

13 Researchers from the United States Department of
14 Agriculture, the University of Hawaii, and other organizations
15 have made progress in combating rapid ohia death, including
16 isolating the fungal pathogen, researching alternative hosts for
17 the pathogen, eliminating other causes for the ohia tree deaths,
18 and making recommendations on preventing the spread of the
19 disease. However, the researchers require additional funding to
20 continue their work.



1 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to combat
2 rapid ohia death. The funding will help to continue pathology
3 research by the Daniel K. Inouye United States Pacific Basin
4 Agricultural Research Center and other organizations.

5 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
6 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$160,000 or so much
7 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2017-2018 and the
8 sum of \$460,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for
9 fiscal year 2018-2019 for rapid ohia death research to be
10 conducted by the Daniel K. Inouye United States Pacific Basin
11 Agricultural Research Center, including the employment of forest
12 pathologist post-doctoral fellows, molecular biology post-
13 doctoral fellows, pathology post-doctoral fellows, technical
14 support for pathology research, materials and supplies for
15 pathogen and molecular detection, and other necessary materials
16 or items.

17 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department
18 of agriculture for the purposes of this Act.

19 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2017.

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Report Title:

Rapid Ohia Death; Ceratocystis; Trees; Research; Study; DOA;
USDA; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates moneys for research to combat rapid ohia death.

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