

MAR 12 2021

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# SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO IDENTIFY HOW COFFEE BERRY BORER AND COFFEE LEAF RUST ENTERED INTO HAWAII AND MEASURES TO PREVENT THE FLOW OF THESE INVASIVE SPECIES INTO THE STATE TO PROTECT THE ONGOING VIABILITY OF HAWAI'I'S COFFEE INDUSTRY.

1 WHEREAS, coffee is ranked by the United States Department  
2 of Agriculture (USDA) as Hawaii's second highest value crop and  
3 is a highly valued commodity in Hawaii's economy; and  
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5 WHEREAS, according to the 2018 State Agriculture overview  
6 published by the USDA, Hawaii produced 5,400,000 pounds (green  
7 weight) of coffee grown on seven thousand one hundred acres,  
8 with an average yield of 1.92 tons per acre, at a unit price of  
9 \$19.40 per pound, for a value of \$50,160,000, demonstrating the  
10 high value of this crop to Hawaii's agriculture sector,  
11 especially since that value is based on just 0.65 percent of  
12 farm acres operated; and  
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14 WHEREAS, quarantine laws within the State should assist in  
15 keeping imported plant material out and possible infested stock  
16 from entering the State; and  
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18 WHEREAS, in 2010, the coffee berry borer, a small beetle  
19 that is harmful to coffee crops worldwide, was found to have  
20 infested coffee crops in the Kona and Kau regions of Hawaii  
21 island and has since been detected on Oahu, Maui, Kauai, and  
22 Lanai; and  
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24 WHEREAS, over ninety percent of coffee farms in the Kona  
25 region are affected by the coffee berry borer, where every farm  
26 in the region has experienced a degree of infestation and  
27 secondary infestation, drastically reducing the yield of coffee  
28 trees and adversely impacting the quantity and price of coffee  
29 from the Kona region; and  
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31 WHEREAS, coffee leaf rust exists in the native forest  
32 realms of Ethiopia, has spread throughout Indonesia and the  
33 entirety of Central and South America; and



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WHEREAS, in October 2020, the USDA confirmed the presence of the fungus *Hemileia vasatrix* (coffee leaf rust) in the Holualoa area of the Kona region, and to date coffee leaf rust has been identified in the United States only in Hawaii, especially in Holualoa, Hawaii; Haiku, Maui, and on Lanai; and

WHEREAS, in February 2021, overall, twenty-five coffee lots across seventeen commercial coffee farms were surveyed, and eleven of the seventeen farms surveyed were positive for coffee leaf rust on both conventional and organic farms; and

WHEREAS, coffee leaf rust can cause severe defoliation of coffee plants that greatly reduces the photosynthetic capacity of plants and vegetative and berry growth are reduced depending on the intensity of rust in the current year; and

WHEREAS, long-term effects of coffee leaf rust may include dieback, which would likely have a significant impact on the following year's yield, with some researchers estimating losses between thirty percent and eighty percent if left unchecked; and

WHEREAS, while the establishment and management of this fungus in other regions presents the opportunity to utilize existing science and tools to respond to the fungus such as planting resistant cultivars, changing climate conditions have resulted in once resistant variants to now be susceptible to coffee leaf rust; and

WHEREAS, the infestation of coffee farms by the coffee berry borer and coffee leaf rust threatens to dismantle Hawaii's coffee industry because of the nature and speed of the infestations; and

WHEREAS, as the State is called upon to assist the effort to combat both the coffee berry borer and coffee leaf rust, it is imperative that this body be provided with a clear understanding of how they were introduced so that the costs of mitigation can be fairly shared among the responsible parties; now, therefore,



# S.R. NO. 217

1 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first  
2 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021,  
3 that this body urges the Department of Agriculture to trace the  
4 introduction of coffee berry borer and coffee leaf rust into  
5 Hawaii and determine what role the importation of green coffee  
6 from regions with known infestations played in the introduction  
7 of these pests, and what risks the continued importation of  
8 green coffee poses to the ongoing viability of Hawaii's coffee  
9 industry; and

10  
11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture  
12 shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations,  
13 including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later  
14 than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session  
15 of 2022; and

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17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the report should include a  
18 discussion of the following topics:

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- 20 (1) The existing statutory and administrative measures  
21 that sought to prevent the importation of coffee berry  
22 borer and coffee leaf rust;
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24 (2) Ways that coffee berry borer and coffee leaf rust were  
25 imported to the State;
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27 (3) New monitoring and effective quarantine strategies and  
28 best management practices, including field sanitation,  
29 proper pruning, fertility, coffee leaf monitoring, and  
30 early detection;
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32 (4) Outreach strategies and community engagement for the  
33 development, education, and dissemination of these  
34 measures for coffee farmers, especially for those who  
35 live near their farms; and
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37 (5) The extent that these new measures could protect those  
38 living in Hawaii's coffee growing regions from the  
39 cumulative impacts of ongoing exposure to pesticides;  
40 and
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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
2 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of  
3 Agriculture and Dean of the College of Tropical Agriculture and  
4 Human Resources of the University of Hawaii.

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OFFERED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

*Jana Acasio*

