



**GOV. MSG. NO. 1125**

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
HONOLULU

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR

May 24, 2022

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi,  
President  
and Members of the Senate  
Thirty-First State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 409  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Honorable Scott K. Saiki,  
Speaker and Members of the  
House of Representatives  
Thirty-First State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 431  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear President Kouchi, Speaker Saiki, and Members of the Legislature:

This is to inform you that on May 24, 2022, the following bill was signed into law:

SB2059 SD1 HD2 CD1

RELATING TO STATE SYMBOLS.  
**ACT 025**

Sincerely,

DAVID Y. IGE  
Governor, State of Hawai'i

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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO STATE SYMBOLS.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the ‘ōhi‘a lehua  
2   (*Metrosideros polymorpha*) is a flowering evergreen tree that is  
3   an endemic plant species found only in the Hawaiian islands.  
4   The legislature recognizes the unique cultural, ecological, and  
5   economic importance of the ‘ōhi‘a lehua and its threatened  
6   existence. The legislature further finds that the ‘ōhi‘a lehua  
7   is one of the most referenced plants in Hawaiian mo‘olelo  
8   (stories), oli (chants), mele (songs), and hula (dances). ‘ōhi‘a  
9   lehua blossoms are iconic, symbolizing Pele's fire, the blood of  
10   warfare, and the bounty of a generous chief. The beautiful and  
11   brilliant flowers make prized lei and are featured in art and  
12   clothing designs. The blossoms and foliage of the ‘ōhi‘a lehua  
13   were frequently used for medicinal purposes. Historically, the  
14   wood of ‘ōhi‘a was preferred for papa ku‘i ‘ai (poi boards) and  
15   was used to make tools and weapons. It is still regarded as a  
16   high-quality wood for construction and furniture.



1           The legislature further finds that 'ōhi'a lehua is a  
2 keystone species of Hawaii's native forests. It is the most  
3 common native tree in the Hawaiian islands. 'Ōhi'a lehua is  
4 endemic to Hawaii's six largest islands and grows in a variety  
5 of environments, from sea level to over eight thousand feet in  
6 elevation, and in diverse ecosystems from bogs to deserts. Its  
7 form ranges from short bushy shrubs to one-hundred-foot canopy  
8 trees. 'Ōhi'a lehua trees are very efficient at capturing water  
9 from the air and rainfall and allowing fresh water to slowly  
10 seep into the ground to recharge the aquifers and ecosystems  
11 from the mountains to the sea. 'Ōhi'a lehua forests are  
12 estimated to cover over eight hundred thousand acres statewide  
13 and are vital to protecting and conserving both Hawaii's  
14 watersheds and native species.

15           Forests dominated by 'ōhi'a lehua are home to at least  
16 twenty-two extant species of forest birds, many of which rely on  
17 the abundant nectar of the lehua blossoms. Its nectar is the  
18 food for many indigenous species, such as the federally  
19 endangered 'akohekohe (crested honeycreeper) and the 'ōpe'ape'a  
20 (Hawaiian hoary bat), the State's only native land animal. Many



1 of Hawaii's remaining native plants and invertebrates also make  
2 their home in 'ōhi'a lehua forests.

3 The legislature also finds that, while the ecological and  
4 cultural importance of the 'ōhi'a lehua is worthy of recognition  
5 and appreciation, the 'ōhi'a is under threat, including from  
6 diseases such as a fungal pathogen called rapid 'ōhi'a death.  
7 Rapid 'ōhi'a death has already killed over one million 'ōhi'a  
8 trees on the island of Hawaii. In recognition of the importance  
9 of protecting 'ōhi'a, new state and federal regulations have been  
10 adopted restricting the importation of close relatives of 'ōhi'a,  
11 plants in the myrtle family, to prevent new strains of 'ōhi'a  
12 diseases from entering Hawaii. Climate change, other invasive  
13 species, and other environmental pressures will no doubt pose  
14 additional threats to 'ōhi'a lehua in the future.

15 The purpose of this Act is to designate 'ōhi'a lehua as the  
16 state endemic tree to recognize its cultural and ecological  
17 importance and raise awareness of the critical threats the plant  
18 species is currently facing, with the hope that it will lead to  
19 effective conservation and growth of healthy 'ōhi'a forests  
20 across the Hawaiian islands.



1 SECTION 2. Chapter 5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended  
2 by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to  
3 read as follows:

4 "§5- State endemic tree. 'Ōhi'a lehua (Metrosideros  
5 polymorpha) is adopted, established, and designated as the  
6 official endemic tree of the State."

7 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

8 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2022.



S.B. NO.

2059  
S.D. 1  
H.D. 2  
C.D. 1

APPROVED this 24 day of May, 2022

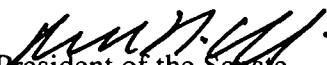
A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David Ige". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent dot above the 'i' in "Ige".


GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

**THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF HAWAI‘I**

Date: May 3, 2022  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

We hereby certify that the foregoing Bill this day passed Final Reading in the Senate of the Thirty-First Legislature of the State of Hawai‘i, Regular Session of 2022.

  
President of the Senate

  
Clerk of the Senate

SB No. 2059, SD 1, HD 2, CD 1

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF HAWAII

Date: May 3, 2022  
Honolulu, Hawaii

We hereby certify that the above-referenced Bill on this day passed Final Reading in the House of Representatives of the Thirty-First Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2022.



Scott K. Saiki  
Speaker  
House of Representatives



Brian L. Takeshita  
Chief Clerk  
House of Representatives