
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ASSIST COFFEE FARMERS IN
PURCHASING ORGANIC FERTILIZER TO PREVENT COFFEE LEAF RUST.

1 WHEREAS, coffee is one of the largest agricultural crops in
2 the State and a highly valued commodity in the State's economy;
3 and
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5 WHEREAS, in 2020, coffee leaf rust, caused by a devastating
6 plant pathogen that can devastate fields of coffee plants, was
7 discovered for the first time on the islands of Hawaii and Maui;
8 and
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10 WHEREAS, considered to be one of the most damaging diseases
11 of coffee plants, coffee leaf rust has also been found on Kauai,
12 Lanai, Molokai, and Oahu; and
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14 WHEREAS, the spread of coffee leaf rust on all Hawaiian
15 Islands threatens the viability of the State's coffee industry;
16 and
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18 WHEREAS, Act 105, Session Laws of Hawaii 2014 (Act 105),
19 appropriated funds for the development and implementation of a
20 pesticide subsidy program, which was implemented in 2016, to
21 assist coffee growers with offsetting the cost of purchasing
22 pesticides containing *Beauveria bassiana*, a naturally occurring
23 fungus known to cause mortality in coffee berry borers; and
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25 WHEREAS, Act 152, Session Laws of Hawaii 2015, established
26 a full-time, exempt, temporary pesticide subsidy program manager
27 position; and
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29 WHEREAS, subsequent legislation extended the sunset dates
30 of the pesticide subsidy program and pesticide subsidy program
31 manager position to June 30, 2023, and June 30, 2024,



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1 respectively, and expanded the pesticide subsidy program to also
2 offer subsidies to purchase contact and systemic fungicides
3 that, when combined, are effective against coffee leaf rust; and
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5 WHEREAS, tree health is a vital component in fighting the
6 infestation and spread of coffee leaf rust; and
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8 WHEREAS, according to the Kona Coffee Farmers Association,
9 the cost of fertilizer for the maintenance of coffee tree health
10 is at least equal to the cost of fungicides that are used to
11 control coffee leaf rust on organic farms; and
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13 WHEREAS, the pesticide subsidy program established by Act
14 105, as amended, does not cover the cost of fertilizer, which
15 prevents coffee farmers from applying and receiving financial
16 assistance for fertilizers that strengthen coffee tree health
17 and immunity to diseases; and
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19 WHEREAS, pesticides and fungicides may present risks to
20 human health and are expensive to obtain and properly store; and
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22 WHEREAS, sustaining coffee tree health reduces reliance on
23 pesticides and fungicides to mitigate the impact of coffee leaf
24 rust; now, therefore,
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26 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
27 Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
28 of 2022, the Senate concurring, that the Department of
29 Agriculture is urged to assist coffee farmers in purchasing
30 organic fertilizer to prevent coffee leaf rust; and
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32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
33 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor and
34 Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture.
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36
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OFFERED BY:



MAR 11 2022

