
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO LITTLE FIRE ANTS.

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

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that little fire ants are
2 an invasive species that are spreading rapidly throughout the
3 State. Little fire ants are yellow-red to light brown in color
4 and are very small, approximately 1.5 millimeters in length,
5 making the ants extremely difficult to detect. Little fire ants
6 move slowly and are easily blown off of leaves, plants, and
7 trees. The ants thrive in damp environments and establish
8 colonies on the ground and in trees, allowing the ants to easily
9 spread in Hawaii's humid climate and environment.

10 The legislature additionally finds that little fire ants
11 deliver a painful sting that can cause rashes or welts that can
12 last for weeks and cause anaphylactic shock. The ants can get
13 into houses, beds, furniture, and food. They sting babies and
14 children, causing extreme pain and discomfort, and cats, dogs,
15 livestock and other animals have gone blind after repeated
16 stings in the eye from little fire ants. Additionally, these



1 pests cause significant disruption and economic damage to
2 Hawaii.

3 The legislature further finds that the Hawaii ant lab was
4 established in 2009 to address the overwhelming need for
5 research, advice, and technical assistance to address and
6 eradicate rapidly spreading little fire ant infestations.
7 Currently, there are numerous organizations involved in
8 addressing little fire ants across the State, including the
9 Hawaii ant lab, pacific cooperative studies unit at the
10 university of Hawaii at Manoa, Hawaii department of agriculture,
11 Hawaii invasive species council, and Oahu invasive species
12 committee. The challenge is that there is no organizational
13 leader to address the problem. The legislature finds that the
14 Hawaii ant lab, in collaboration with the department of
15 agriculture, is best suited to take the lead in addressing this
16 issue. The Hawaii ant lab has staff on Hawaii island and Oahu,
17 with the majority on Hawaii island, where little fire ants were
18 first detected. The Hawaii ant lab on Oahu currently has only
19 two staff members.

20 As of January 2024, there were forty-nine active sites on
21 Oahu that were either undergoing treatment; in the long-term



1 monitoring phase, which includes post-treatments and addressing
2 hotspots; or unmanaged or untreated due to a lack of staffing
3 and capacity.

4 The purpose of this Act is to:

5 (1) Recognize the Hawaii ant lab as the leading
6 organization in addressing little fire ant
7 infestations, with support of the department of
8 agriculture, plant pest and disease control branch;
9 and

10 (2) Appropriate funds to support the Hawaii ant lab in
11 mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the
12 State.

13 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
14 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
15 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 for
16 native resources and fire protection program (LNR402) to support
17 the Hawaii ant lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants
18 in the State through:

19 (1) The addition of positions to the Hawaii ant lab
20 on Oahu to address infestations on Oahu;



1 (2) Raising public awareness regarding little fire ant
2 infestations and treatments through community
3 outreach; and

4 (3) Its operations, including funds for test kit supplies
5 and treatment supplies.

6 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
7 land and natural resources for the purposes of this Act.

8 SECTION 3. In accordance with section 9 of article VII of
9 the Hawaii State Constitution and sections 37-91 and 37-93,
10 Hawaii Revised Statutes, the legislature has determined that the
11 appropriations contained in H.B. No. , will cause the state
12 general fund expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2024-2025 to be
13 exceeded by \$ or per cent. In addition, the
14 appropriation contained in this Act will cause the general fund
15 expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2024-2025 to be further
16 exceeded by \$ or per cent. The combined total
17 amount of general fund appropriations contained in only these
18 two Acts will cause the state general fund expenditure ceiling
19 for fiscal year 2024-2025 to be exceeded by
20 \$ or per cent. The reasons for exceeding the
21 general fund expenditure ceiling are that:



H.B. NO. 2644

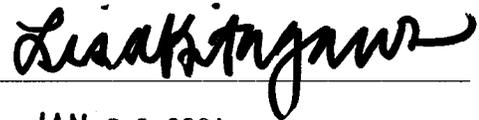
1 (1) The appropriation made in this Act is necessary to
2 serve the public interest; and

3 (2) The appropriation made in this Act meets the needs
4 addressed by this Act.

5 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.

6

INTRODUCED BY:



JAN 23 2024



H.B. NO. 2644

Report Title:

Little Fire Ants; Hawaii Ant Lab; Appropriation; Expenditure Ceiling

Description:

Recognizes the Hawaii ant lab as the lead organization in addressing little fire ant infestations, with support of the department of agriculture, plant pest and disease control branch. Appropriates funds to support the Hawaii ant lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State.

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