
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 is 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 leaves, plants, and trees.
7 The ants thrive in damp environments and establish colonies on
8 the ground and in trees, allowing the ants to easily spread in
9 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's plant pest control branch, is best suited to take
16 the lead in addressing this issue. The Hawaii ant lab has staff
17 on the islands of Hawaii and Oahu, with the majority on the
18 island of Hawaii, where little fire ants were first detected.
19 The Hawaii ant lab on the island of Oahu currently has only two
20 staff members.



1 As of January 2024, there were forty-nine active sites on
2 the island of Oahu that were either undergoing treatment; in the
3 long-term monitoring phase, which includes post-treatments and
4 addressing hotspots; or unmanaged or untreated due to a lack of
5 staffing and capacity.

6 The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds to support
7 the Hawaii ant lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants
8 in the State.

9 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
10 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much
11 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 to support
12 the Hawaii ant lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants
13 in the State through:

- 14 (1) The addition of full-time equivalent (FTE)
- 15 positions to the Hawaii ant lab on the island of Oahu
- 16 to address infestations on the island of Oahu;
- 17 (2) Raising public awareness regarding little fire ant
- 18 infestations and treatments through community
- 19 outreach; and
- 20 (3) Its operations, including funds for test kit supplies
- 21 and treatment supplies.



1 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
2 agriculture for the purposes of this Act.

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

- 17 (1) The appropriation made in this Act is necessary to
18 serve the public interest; and
- 19 (2) The appropriation made in this Act meets the needs
20 addressed by this Act.

21 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.



Report Title:

Little Fire Ants; Hawaii Ant Lab; Appropriation; General Fund
Expenditure Ceiling Exceeded

Description:

Appropriates funds to support the Hawaii Ant Lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State. Declares that the appropriation exceeds the state general fund expenditure ceiling for 2024-2025. Effective 7/1/3000. (SD1)

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