

MAR 08 2024

SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE STATE TO PROHIBIT THE INTRODUCTION OF BIOCONTROL
AGENTS THAT MIGHT THREATEN ECONOMICALLY IMPORTANT FORAGE
GRASS SPECIES.

1 WHEREAS, Hawaii's beef cattle production is a major
2 agricultural industry in the State and contributes over
3 \$48,000,000 to the state economy each year; and
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5 WHEREAS, the beef cattle industry contributes to the
6 economy through job creation, business and property taxes,
7 purchasing of goods and services, and the sale of animals and
8 meat products, which in turn helps to improve the State's food
9 security; and
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11 WHEREAS, Hawaii's rangelands represent approximately twenty
12 percent, or 750,000 acres, of the total land mass in the State;
13 and
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15 WHEREAS, these rangelands also play a vital role for all
16 communities of the State through the ecosystem services which
17 flow from these lands such as stabilizing soils, enhancing the
18 watershed capacity, sequestering carbon, cycling nutrients, and
19 suppressing noxious weeds; and
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21 WHEREAS, ranchers effectively are grass farmers that
22 utilize cattle to manage the ground cover to minimize bare soil
23 and erosion, maximize water infiltration, improve soil health,
24 and decrease the spread of noxious weeds while generating
25 operating income that pays for their resource management to
26 continue; and
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28 WHEREAS, without ranchers and the land stewardship they
29 provide, these rangelands would be left unmanaged and become
30 inundated with noxious weeds and an increased fire fuel load;
31 and
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33 WHEREAS, today the State's beef cattle industry is
34 dependent on many forage grasses that were intentionally
35 introduced into the State to support livestock production and



1 that remain necessary, not only to help feed the communities
2 across the islands of the State, but also to provide important
3 manageable and sustainable ground cover, which is functionally
4 important for the ecology of Hawaii's rangelands; and

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6 WHEREAS, these important forage grasses are increasingly
7 being labeled as "invasive" and targeted for control or
8 eradication by individuals and organizations without due regard
9 for the adverse impact that this eradication would have on
10 ranchers and in turn the stewardship role they play; and

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12 WHEREAS, livestock grazing is the single most important and
13 practical tool to manage introduced forage grasses at the
14 landscape scale to reduce the threat of fire along the wildland
15 urban interface; and

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17 WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes the economic and
18 environmental contributions and the importance of ranching and
19 beef cattle production; and

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21 WHEREAS, the Legislature also recognizes the importance of
22 high-quality forage grasses for the beef cattle industry to
23 remain viable to continue to steward the land that ranchers
24 consider their kuleana (responsibility) to care for and enhance;
25 now, therefore,

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27 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second
28 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2024,
29 that the State is urged to prohibit the introduction of
30 biocontrol agents that might threaten economically important
31 forage grass species; and

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33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State is urged to provide
34 for the protection of Hawaii's rangelands and important forage
35 grass species that sustain beef cattle production through
36 funding policies, initiatives, and directives to state agencies
37 to incentivize livestock grazing for the management of forage
38 grasses and other vegetation on lands managed by the State and
39 private sector that are currently undermanaged; and
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S.R. NO. 154

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
2 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Chairperson of the
3 Board of Agriculture, and mayor of each county.

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OFFERED BY: *Keith M. Packer* *40*

