
HOUSE 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 play a critical role in managing lands
22 and reducing fuels loads by utilizing cattle to manage the
23 ground cover to minimize bare soil and erosion, maximize water
24 infiltration, improve soil health, and decrease the spread of
25 noxious weeds while generating operating income that pays for
26 their resource management to 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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1 WHEREAS, today the State's beef cattle industry is
2 dependent on many forage grasses that were intentionally
3 introduced into the State to support livestock production and
4 that remain necessary, not only to help feed the communities
5 across the islands of the State, but also to provide important
6 manageable and sustainable ground cover, which is functionally
7 important for the ecology of Hawaii's rangelands; and
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9 WHEREAS, these important forage grasses are increasingly
10 being labeled as "invasive" and targeted for control or
11 eradication by individuals and organizations without due regard
12 for the adverse impact that this eradication would have on
13 ranchers and in turn the stewardship role they play; and
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15 WHEREAS, livestock grazing is the single most important and
16 practical tool to manage introduced forage grasses at the
17 landscape scale to reduce the threat of fire along the wildland
18 urban interface; and
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20 WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes the economic and
21 environmental contributions and the importance of ranching and
22 beef cattle production; and
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24 WHEREAS, the Legislature also recognizes the importance of
25 high-quality forage grasses for the beef cattle industry to
26 remain viable to continue to steward the land that ranchers
27 consider their kuleana (responsibility) to care for and enhance;
28 now, therefore,
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30 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
31 Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
32 Session of 2024, that the State is urged to prohibit the
33 introduction of biocontrol agents that might threaten
34 economically important forage grass species; and
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36 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the State is also requested to
37 consider a holistic approach to address wildfire risk by
38 prioritizing fuel reduction of unmanaged lands that can utilize
39 a variety of tools including grazing, creation of fire buffers,
40 mechanical controls, and the consideration of the use of
41 applicable strategies for landscape level control, so long that



1 it takes into consideration economic and ecological implications
2 as well as potential impacts to critical industries; and
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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State is urged to provide
5 for the protection of Hawaii's rangelands and important forage
6 grass species that sustain beef cattle production through
7 funding policies, initiatives, and directives to state agencies
8 to incentivize livestock grazing for the management of forage
9 grasses and other vegetation on lands managed by the State and
10 private sector that are currently undermanaged; and
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12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
13 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor,
14 Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture, and mayor of each
15 county.
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