THE SENATE
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2024
STATE OF HAWAII

S.C.R. NO. 153

MAR 0 8 2024

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII TO CONDUCT A STUDY EVALUATING THE FEASIBILITY OF USING MYCOPESTICIDES AS A METHOD TO CONTROL WASMANNIA AUROPUNCTATA.

WHEREAS, the presence of Wasmannia auropunctata, commonly known as little fire ants, an invasive species native to South America, poses a significant threat to public safety, environmental stability, and community health; and

WHEREAS, these aggressive and harmful ants are spreading rapidly throughout the Hawaiian Islands, and their stings can cause intense burning sensations, painful itchy welts, and adverse health reactions, including blindness, in humans, animals, and especially children; and

WHEREAS, mycopesticides, which include mycoinsecticides, mycofungicides, mycoherbicides, and nematophagous fungi, are products with active ingredients consisting of fungal cells, such as spores or hyphae, that produce toxins that eventually kill their host species, whether they are insects, other fungi, weeds, or nematodes; and

WHEREAS, various mycopesticides have been used as early as approximately 1880 as biocontrol agents of agricultural pests and offer a more environmentally friendly, species-specific alternative to broad-spectrum, conventional pesticides; and

WHEREAS, mycopesticides require lower research and development costs compared to conventional pesticides and pose reduced risks to humans and animals; and

WHEREAS, mycopesticides are very species-specific, and the scientific literature has not yet shown which species of fungus could be effective against Wasmannia auropunctata; and

WHEREAS, any potential negative side effects of a mycopesticide on the Native Hawaiian ecosystem should be thoroughly investigated before the mycopesticide is introduced; and

WHEREAS, the University of Hawaii is uniquely positioned to study this issue as Hawaii's only R1 Research University; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2024, the House of Representatives concurring, that the University of Hawaii is requested to conduct a study evaluating the feasibility of using mycopesticides as a method to control Wasmannia auropunctata; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this study is requested to determine which species of mycopesticides, if any, could be used as a method to control Wasmannia auropunctata and, if a species is found, to determine what potential:

(1) Advantages, if any, this mycopesticide could have compared to current methods of control, including but not limited to factors related to cost, human health, and environmental health; and

(2) Negative impacts, if any, this mycopesticide could have if released into Hawaii's ecosystem; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the University of Hawaii is requested to submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2025; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the President of the University of Hawaii; Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture; and Research Manager of the Hawaii Ant Lab.

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OFFERED BY: _____