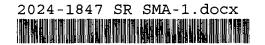
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MAR 0 8 2024

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A PERFORMANCE AUDIT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S PLANT INDUSTRY DIVISION.

WHEREAS, the establishment and spread of invasive species 1 is harmful to agriculture, native biota, public health, and the 2 economic well-being of the State; and 3 4 WHEREAS, the State's mandated biosecurity program 5 6 established in 2008, pursuant to part VI of chapter 150A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is delivered by the Plant Quarantine Branch 7 within the Plant Industry Division of the Department of 8 Agriculture, which also comprises the Pesticides Branch and 9 10 Plant Pest Control Branch; and 11 WHEREAS, the Plant Quarantine Branch inspects plants, 12 insects, microorganisms, and non-domestic animals that are 13 imported and certifies plants for export; the Pesticides Branch 14 regulates the manufacture, sale, and use of pesticides; and the 15 Plant Pest Control Branch not only inspects and certifies seeds, 16 but also eradicates, contains, or controls pests of plants that 17 could cause significant economic damage to Hawaii's agriculture, 18 19 environment, and quality of life; and 20 WHEREAS, in 2016, the Department of Agriculture, 21 22 recognizing the challenges in developing a biosecurity program, which include but are not limited to the State's dependency on 23 imports and high cost of controlling and eradicating invasive 24 species, developed the Hawaii Interagency Biosecurity Plan 25 (2017-2027) in collaboration with other state, county, and 26 federal agencies, as well as industry stakeholders and the 27 public, to be the guiding strategy of the State for an 28 29 effective, interagency biosecurity system that: 30 Prevents the entry and interisland movement of pests 31 (1) and prohibited or restricted organisms without a 32 33 permit; and 34



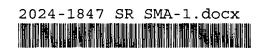
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1 (2) Responds effectively to eradicate, control, reduce, 2 and suppress incipient pest populations and 3 established pests and seize and dispose of prohibited or restricted organisms without a permit; and 4 5 6 WHEREAS, the Hawaii Interagency Biosecurity Plan outlines one hundred forty-seven action items assigned to various state 7 agencies to implement for the protection of Hawaii's 8 9 agriculture, environment, and people from the impacts of invasive species; and 10 11 WHEREAS, the Hawaii Interagency Biosecurity Plan states 12 that adding state staff capacity is essential if the Department 13 14 of Agriculture is expected to fully meet its obligations to protect Hawaii from invasive species; noting that between 2008, 15 when the state biosecurity program was implemented, and 2016, 16 17 the Department of Agriculture suffered a decrease of staff by 18 eighteen percent, while both the tonnage of incoming air cargo and cargo moving out of Honolulu Harbor increased by thirty-four 19 20 percent and twenty-one percent, respectively; and 21 WHEREAS, the Office of the Auditor, pursuant to Act 243, 22 Session Laws of Hawaii 2016, conducted a financial and 23 24 performance audit of the duties and facilities of the Plant 25 Quarantine Branch, including the Branch's biosecurity programs 26 and related programs and submitted Report No. 17-05, entitled "Audit of Hawai'i Department of Agriculture's Plant Quarantine 27 Branch" to the Legislature; and 28 29 30 WHEREAS, Report No. 17-05 found that the Plant Quarantine Branch not only lacked the data gathering and data analysis 31 functions necessary to actively and continuously assess risks 32 from invasive species, but also the organizational framework 33 34 necessary to manage and communicate risks from invasive species. The report states, in part, that while food and farm product 35 imports continue to rise, Plant Quarantine Branch staffing 36 levels have still not recovered from a 2009 reduction-in-force 37 that cut thirty-seven positions, most of which were Inspector I 38 39 through III positions; and provided seven recommendations to the 40 Department of Agriculture and the Plant Quarantine Branch, collectively; and 41 42



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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	WHEREAS, pursuant to section 23-7.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the Auditor reviewed the implementation status of its seven recommendations in 2020, and submitted Report No. 20-12, entitled "Follow Up on Recommendations from Report No. 17-05, Audit of Hawai'i Department of Agriculture's Plant Quarantine Branch" to the Legislature, finding that the Plant Quarantine Branch implemented one recommendation, partially implemented five recommendations, and has not implemented one recommendation; and			
11 12 13 14 15 16 17	WHEREAS, a January 2023 progress report on the Hawaii Interagency Biosecurity Plan prepared by the Hawaii Invasive Species Council found that sixty-eight percent of the action items of the Hawaii Interagency Biosecurity Plan are completed, approved, ongoing, or in progress and thirty-two percent of the action items are not yet stated, no longer being pursued, or need reevaluation; and			
18 19 20 21 22 23 24	WHEREAS, it has been stated in several legislative hearings and informational briefings during the Thirty-Second Legislative Session, that the Plant Pest Control Branch has been utilizing staff and operational capacity from the Plant Quarantine Branch to carry out its duties; and			
25 26 27 28 29	WHEREAS, the full and timely implementation of the Hawaii Interagency Biosecurity Plan is necessary to strengthen the State's biosecurity system and mitigate risks associated with invasive species; now, therefore,			
30 31 32 33 34 35	BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2024, that the Office of the Auditor is requested to conduct a performance audit of the Department of Agriculture's Plant Industry Division; and			
36 37 38 39 40	BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the performance audit is requested to also include: (1) Follow-ups to:			



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1 2 3 4		(A)	Report No. 17-05, entitled "Audit of Hawaiʻi Department of Agriculture's Plant Quarantine Branch"; and	
4 5 6 7 8 9		(B)	Report No. 20-21, entitled "Follow Up on Recommendations from Report No. 17-05, Audit of Hawai'i Department of Agriculture's Plant Quarantine Branch";	
10 11 12		Reports on the implementation status of the action items of the Hawaii Interagency Biosecurity Plan; and		
13 14 15 16	I	Depar actic	valuation of the true operational capacity of the ctment of Agriculture to achieve its assigned on items established in the Hawaii Interagency ecurity Plan; and	
17 18 19 20 21 22 23	BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Auditor is requested to submit a report of their 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			
23 24 25 26 27 28 29	BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the State Auditor and the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture.			
			OFFERED BY: Mul M.M.	

By Request

