
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the Hawaii invasive
2 species council was first established by executive order
3 no. 02-03 (2002) and formally codified by Act 85, Session Laws
4 of Hawaii 2003, to foster and organize coordinated approaches
5 among various executive departments, federal agencies, and
6 international and local initiatives for the prevention and
7 control of invasive species.

8 The legislature further finds that the Hawaii invasive
9 species council's work is critical to coordinating, supporting,
10 and extending the capacities of state agencies to prevent and
11 control invasive species through cross-agency programs. These
12 programs perform vital functions, including monitoring for pests
13 around ports of entry, expanding public pest reporting to
14 provide an online pest report option, providing predictive risk
15 assessments on thousands of potentially invasive plant species,
16 and facilitating a competitive grant process to fund projects
17 that further extend capacities and research.



1 The legislature recognizes that the staff of the Hawaii
2 invasive species council, guided by the council itself,
3 coordinate and manage these important programs to prevent and
4 control invasive species. The staff is presently comprised of
5 one full-time natural resource management specialist, serving as
6 program manager, five full-time contracted staff members, and
7 one part-time student hire.

8 The legislature notes that, at the council's September 2025
9 meeting, the council considered the current staff positions and
10 the administrative transfer of these positions and functions
11 from the department of land and natural resources to the
12 department of agriculture and biosecurity pursuant to Act 236,
13 Session Laws of Hawaii 2025. Following discussion, the council
14 unanimously approved a request to pursue a new organizational
15 structure for the council's support staff, including requesting
16 that the legislature establish an executive director position.

17 The legislature further finds that, to facilitate the
18 efficient administrative transfer of the council, prevent
19 interruptions to council programs, and ensure that the council
20 continues to function as an independent, cabinet-level



1 coordinating council, the council's request to establish an
2 executive director position is warranted.

3 The legislature additionally notes that an important duty
4 of the council is to suggest appropriate legislation to improve
5 the State's administration of invasive species programs and
6 policies. Through this feedback, the council's statutory powers
7 and duties can be appropriately amended to improve outcomes.

8 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to:

- 9 (1) Establish the position of the Hawaii invasive species
10 council executive director;
- 11 (2) Transfer the council's funding for the 2026-2027
12 fiscal year to the department of land and natural
13 resources in accordance with its current
14 administration; and
- 15 (3) Require a report to the legislature.

16 SECTION 2. Section 194-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
17 amended to read as follows:

18 "~~§194-2~~ [~~}]Establishment of council; duties.[+]~~ (a)

19 There is established the invasive species council for the
20 special purpose of providing policy level direction,
21 coordination, and planning among state departments, federal



1 agencies, and international and local initiatives for the
2 control and eradication of harmful invasive species infestations
3 throughout the State and for preventing the introduction of
4 other invasive species that may be potentially harmful. The
5 council shall:

- 6 (1) Maintain a broad overview of the invasive species
7 problem in the State;
- 8 (2) Advise, consult, and coordinate invasive species-
9 related efforts with and between the departments of
10 agriculture and biosecurity, land and natural
11 resources, health, and transportation, as well as
12 state, federal, international, and privately organized
13 programs and policies;
- 14 (3) Identify and prioritize each lead agency's
15 organizational and resource shortfalls with respect to
16 invasive species;
- 17 (4) After consulting with appropriate state agencies,
18 create and implement a plan that includes the
19 prevention, early detection, rapid response, control,
20 enforcement, and education of the public with respect
21 to invasive species, as well as fashion a mission



1 statement articulating the State's position against
2 invasive species; provided that the appropriate state
3 agencies shall collaborate with the counties and
4 communities to develop and implement a systematic
5 approach to reduce and control coqui frog infestations
6 on public lands that are near or adjacent to
7 communities, and shall provide annual reports on the
8 progress made in achieving this objective;

9 (5) Coordinate and promote the State's position with
10 respect to federal issues, including:

11 (A) Quarantine preemption;

12 (B) International trade agreements that ignore the
13 problem of invasive species in [~~Hawaii~~] the
14 State;

15 (C) First class mail inspection prohibition;

16 (D) Whether quarantine of domestic pests arriving
17 from the [~~mainland~~] continental United States
18 should be provided by the federal government;

19 (E) Coordinating efforts with federal agencies to
20 maximize resources and reduce or eliminate system
21 gaps and leaks, including deputizing the United



- 1 States Department of Agriculture's plant
2 protection and quarantine inspectors to enforce
3 [~~Hawaii's~~] the State's laws;
- 4 (F) Promoting the amendment of federal laws as
5 necessary, including the Lacey Act Amendments of
6 1981, Title 16 United States Code sections
7 3371-3378; Public Law 97-79, and laws related to
8 inspection of domestic airline passengers,
9 baggage, and cargo; and
- 10 (G) Coordinating efforts and issues with the
11 [~~federal~~] National Invasive Species Council and
12 its National Invasive Species [~~Management~~]
13 Council Annual Work Plan;
- 14 (6) Identify and record all invasive species present in
15 the State;
- 16 (7) Designate the department of agriculture and
17 biosecurity, health, or land and natural resources as
18 the lead agency for each function of invasive species
19 control, including prevention, rapid response,
20 eradication, enforcement, and education;



- 1 (8) Identify all state, federal, and other moneys expended
2 for the purposes of the invasive species problem in
3 the State;
- 4 (9) Identify all federal and private funds available to
5 the State to fight invasive species and advise and
6 assist state departments to acquire these funds;
- 7 (10) Advise the governor and legislature on budgetary and
8 other issues regarding invasive species;
- 9 (11) Provide annual reports on budgetary and other related
10 issues to the legislature twenty days prior to each
11 regular session;
- 12 (12) Include and coordinate with the counties in the fight
13 against invasive species to increase resources and
14 funding and to address county-sponsored activities
15 that involve invasive species;
- 16 (13) Review state agency mandates and commercial interests
17 that sometimes call for the maintenance of potentially
18 destructive alien species as resources for sport
19 hunting, aesthetic resources, or other values;



- 1 (14) Review the structure of fines and penalties to ensure
2 maximum deterrence for invasive species-related
3 crimes;
- 4 (15) Suggest appropriate legislation to improve the State's
5 administration of invasive species programs and
6 policies;
- 7 (16) Incorporate and expand upon the department of
8 agriculture and biosecurity's weed risk assessment
9 protocol to the extent appropriate for the council's
10 invasive species control and eradication efforts; and
- 11 (17) Perform any other function necessary to effectuate the
12 purposes of this chapter.
- 13 (b) The council shall be placed within the department of
14 land and natural resources for administrative purposes only and
15 shall be composed of:
- 16 (1) The president of the [~~University~~] university of
17 Hawaii, or the president's designated representative;
- 18 (2) The director, or the director's designated
19 representative, of each of the following departments:
- 20 (A) Business, economic development, and tourism;
- 21 (B) Health; and



1 (C) Transportation; and
2 (3) The chairperson, or the chairperson's designated
3 representative, of each of the following departments:

4 (A) Agriculture and biosecurity; and

5 (B) Land and natural resources.

6 (c) Representatives of federal agencies, the legislature,
7 and members of the private sector shall be asked to participate
8 or consulted for advice and assistance. Representatives of the
9 legislature shall consist of eight members, as follows:

10 (1) Four senators, one from each county, to be selected by
11 the senate president; and

12 (2) Four representatives, one from each county, to be
13 selected by the speaker of the house of
14 representatives.

15 (d) The council shall appoint an executive director who
16 shall be exempt from chapter 76. The salary of the executive
17 director shall be set by the council and shall not be less than
18 the salary of the forestry and wildlife manager of the Oahu
19 branch of the division of forestry and wildlife of the
20 department of land and natural resources. The executive
21 director shall:



- 1 (1) Be a person with:
- 2 (A) Appropriate education and training in the field
- 3 of biosecurity and invasive species prevention
- 4 and control; and
- 5 (B) Experience in managing and coordinating
- 6 biosecurity and invasive species prevention,
- 7 control, and outreach programs;
- 8 (2) Serve as the council's chief executive officer;
- 9 (3) Be responsible for carrying out the purposes and
- 10 duties of the council, as assigned;
- 11 (4) Serve on a full-time basis; and
- 12 (5) Be included in any benefit program generally
- 13 applicable to the officers and employees of the State.

14 [~~(d)~~] (e) The council shall meet [~~no~~] not less than twice

15 annually to discuss and assess progress and recommend changes to

16 the invasive species programs based on results of current risk

17 assessments, performance standards, and other relevant data.

18 Notwithstanding any law to the contrary:

- 19 (1) A simple majority of voting members of the council
- 20 shall constitute a quorum to do business; and



1 (2) Any action taken by the council shall be by a simple
2 majority of the voting members.

3 [~~(e)~~] (f) The council shall submit a report of its
4 activities to the governor and legislature annually."

5 SECTION 3. Act 236, Session Laws of Hawaii 2025, is
6 amended by amending section 42 to read as follows:

7 "SECTION 42. There is appropriated out of the general
8 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$4,250,000 or so much
9 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for the
10 operations of the Hawaii invasive species council.

11 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
12 [~~agriculture and biosecurity~~] land and natural resources for the
13 purposes of this Act."

14 SECTION 4. The Hawaii invasive species council shall
15 submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including
16 any proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than
17 December 1, 2026 that shall include recommendations for proposed
18 legislation to:

19 (1) Improve the State's administration of invasive species
20 programs and policies; and



1 (2) Ensure the responsibilities and duties of the council
2 continue to efficiently and effectively promote the
3 prevention and control of invasive species in the
4 State.

5 SECTION 5. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
6 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

7 SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.

8



S.B. NO. 2488
S.D. 1

Report Title:

DLNR; DAB; HISC; Executive Director; Appropriation; Report

Description:

Establishes the position of the Hawaii Invasive Species Council Executive Director. Appropriates funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources, rather than the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, for the HISC for fiscal year 2026-2027. Requires a report to the Legislature. Effective 7/1/2050. (SD1)

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