

**ACT 198**

H.B. NO. 353

A Bill for an Act Relating to Agriculture.

*Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:*

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that coffee is the fourth largest agricultural crop in the State and is a highly valued commodity in Hawaii's economy. Coffee plantations cover approximately eight thousand acres of land in the State and generate total farm revenues of approximately \$30,000,000. In addition to its value as an agricultural commodity, interest in coffee farms as part of the agricultural tourism experience is growing. According to the Hawaii agricultural statistics service, the value of the agricultural tourism industry, with one hundred and twelve farms earning income from agricultural tourism activities, was measured at \$38,800,000, in 2006. Coffee farmers participating in the agricultural tourism industry have been able to increase coffee revenues by selling directly

to visitors to their farms, thus increasing the role that coffee plays in agricultural tourism, which is a growing part of the State's economy.

The legislature also finds that, in recent years, the coffee berry borer, a small beetle that is harmful to coffee crops worldwide, has infested coffee crops in the Kona and South Kona regions. The infestation of coffee farms by the coffee berry borer threatens to dismantle Hawaii's entire coffee industry because of the nature and speed of the infestations. Currently, it is estimated that over ninety per cent of coffee farms in the Kona region are affected by the coffee berry borer, and it is likely that every farm in the region will be experiencing some degree of infestation soon. Infestations and secondary effects of infestation have drastically reduced the yield of coffee trees and adversely impacted the quantity and prices of coffee from the Kona region.

The legislature also finds that ongoing efforts to control the damage to crops are critical, now that the coffee berry borer is present in Hawaii. It can also be expected that the coffee berry borer will eventually spread to other regions and counties of Hawaii where coffee is farmed. Methods to combat the coffee berry borer are used effectively in other coffee-growing regions of the world. However, farmers in Hawaii need to be educated about these methods and how to effectively apply them. In addition, the costs of the required supplies and labor to implement these methods can be financially prohibitive for smaller coffee farms in the State.

The legislature further finds that, because of Hawaii's unique terrain and the preponderance of small-sized farms with an aging population of farmers, the existing labor-intensive methods of combating the coffee berry borer are more challenging to implement in Hawaii than in other regions of the world. For that reason, research is needed to develop new methods appropriate for Hawaii's coffee farms, including those that could reduce the cost of labor necessary to control the coffee berry borer. The legislature finds that it is essential to take immediate action to develop methods to combat the coffee berry borer and to mitigate the future impacts to other coffee-producing regions in the State.

The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds for the control and containment of the damage caused by the coffee berry borer and for research to develop new methods of preventing and treating infestations.

**SECTION 2.** There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$250,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2013-2014 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2014-2015 for the department of agriculture to research and develop methods for the prevention and treatment of coffee berry borer infestations; provided that no funds shall be expended unless matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis from either private or other government sources.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department of agriculture for the purposes of this section.

**SECTION 3.** There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$300,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2013-2014 for the department of agriculture to fund efforts to control and mitigate the damage from the coffee berry borer infestation in Hawaii; provided that no funds shall be expended unless matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis from either private or other government sources.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of agriculture for the purposes of this section.

**SECTION 4.** This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2013.

(Approved June 26, 2013.)