

ACT 102

H.B. NO. 1716

A Bill for an Act Making an Appropriation for Invasive Species Prevention, Control, Outreach, Research, and Planning.

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

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the invasion of Hawaii by insects, disease-bearing organisms, snakes, weeds, and other pests is the single greatest threat to Hawaii's economy and natural environment and to the health and lifestyle of Hawaii's people. The legislature further finds that immediate action is needed to mitigate the threats and impacts of invasive species.

Pests already cause millions of dollars in crop losses, the extinction of native species, the destruction of native forests, and the spread of disease, but many more harmful pests now threaten to invade Hawaii and wreak further damage. Even one new pest, like the brown tree snake or the red imported fire ant, could forever change the character of our islands. For example, a 2010 study by Shwiff, et al., found that if brown tree snakes were introduced to Hawaii, the cost to the State in lost tourism, health costs, and damage to power infrastructure could total \$2,140,000,000 per year. Stopping the influx of new pests and containing their spread is essential to Hawaii's current and future well-being.

The legislature previously recognized the importance of invasive species as an issue in Hawaii through Act 85, Session Laws of Hawaii 2003, which resulted in the creation of the interagency Hawaii invasive species council. The Hawaii invasive species council, mandated by chapter 194, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is created for the special purpose of providing policy level direction, coordination, and planning among agencies in Hawaii. The Hawaii invasive species council has met this mandate, in part, by disbursing funds on an annual basis to support critical invasive species prevention, control, outreach, research, and planning projects that enhance or supplement existing departmental projects.

A 2002 study by the legislative reference bureau titled "Filling the Gaps in the Fight Against Invasive Species" estimated the annual cost to address invasive species issues in Hawaii at \$50,000,000. The original goal for an annual Hawaii invasive species council budget was \$5,000,000 from the general fund, though

the initial approved appropriation in fiscal year 2005 was \$2,000,000. From fiscal years 2010-2013, no general funds were provided. In fiscal year 2014, \$750,000 was provided from the general fund. A large increase in appropriated funds is necessary to maintain what capacity has been built over the years for invasive species mitigation in Hawaii and to effectively protect Hawaii's natural resources.

Governor Neil Abercrombie's "A New Day in Hawaii" plan calls for the stewardship of the natural resources upon which our survival, economy, and quality of life depend. Priority actions of the plan include managing invasive species and increasing Hawaii's ability to withstand impacts from climate change.

The purpose of this Act is to provide funds to the department of land and natural resources, as administrative host of the Hawaii invasive species council, for the immediate protection of Hawaii's environment and economy and the health and lifestyle of its people through the support of invasive species prevention, control, research, outreach, and planning.

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$5,000,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2014-2015 to be expended on projects undertaken in accordance with the Hawaii invasive species council, including but not limited to invasive species prevention, control, outreach, research, and planning.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of land and natural resources for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2014.

(Approved June 19, 2014.)