



RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING THAT THE COUNTIES OF HAWAII HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL EFFORTS AND URGING THE CITY ADMINISTRATION TO COLLABORATIVELY ADVANCE THOSE EFFORTS IN THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU.

WHEREAS, Hawai'i is a remote volcanic archipelago that is a biodiversity hotspot and as much as 90 percent of its native flora and fauna are endemic to the islands that are found nowhere else in the world and are particularly vulnerable to competition from invasive species; and

WHEREAS, invasive species are non-native organisms that adapt easily to a new area, reproduce quickly, and harm the environment and native flora and fauna; and

WHEREAS, without effective management, invasive species will cause billions of dollars in damage to Hawai'i's agriculture, environment, and economy, and lead to negative impacts to Native Hawaiian traditional and customary practices, human health, recreational activities, and our unique way of life; and

WHEREAS, the threat posed by invasive species is amplified by climate change and increased air and sea travel to Hawai'i, exacerbates the risks presented by natural disasters, and, perhaps most devastatingly, often results in irreversible damage to our natural and cultural environment; and

WHEREAS, invasive species undermine strategies for climate preparedness and resilience, as their impacts may fundamentally alter natural and built systems, including freshwater supply and local food resources; and

WHEREAS, invasive species are already appearing, spreading, or well established within the City and County of Honolulu ("City"), examples of which include the exploding population of coconut rhinoceros beetles; the spread of little fire ants in Windward communities and beyond; the growing coqui frog populations in Waimānalo and Pālolo Valleys; the invasive soft coral recently discovered at Pu'uloa (Pearl Harbor); cane tibouchina, miconia, invasive albizia trees, and other invasive plant species that are proliferating in native watershed forests and displacing native species; and the fungal pathogen known as Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death; and



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WHEREAS, the State of Hawai'i ("State"), through its Department of Land and Natural Resources ("DLNR"), is responsible for protecting aquatic and terrestrial resources and, through its Department of Agriculture, is responsible for preventing the introduction of invasive species into the State; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaii Invasive Species Council ("HISC"), a State interagency board administratively attached to the DLNR, provides policy direction, coordination, and planning among State departments, federal agencies, and international and local initiatives to control and eradicate invasive species and prevent their introduction into Hawai'i; and

WHEREAS, the HISC currently receives \$5.75 million from the State to support programs, including county-specific invasive species committees, but the estimated funding required to operate an optimal biosecurity program for the State exceeds \$50 million per year; and

WHEREAS, given the constraints of current State funding to deal with invasive species and the risk of significant harm across the counties, it behooves the counties to proactively and collaboratively address the unique challenges and issues presented by invasive species in their respective jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, the Big Island, Kaua'i, Maui, and O'ahu Invasive Species Committees are projects of the University of Hawai'i-Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit that are voluntary partnerships of government, private and non-profit organizations, and volunteers; and

WHEREAS, these invasive species committees focus on preventing and controlling invasive species in their respective counties, surveying for and identifying threats, conducting control activities on public and private property, advancing research and development of invasive species control tools and techniques, providing education and outreach to local residents, and filling the gaps not addressed by other invasive species control programs; and

WHEREAS, the Maui Invasive Species Committee ("MISC") receives substantial annual funding from the County of Maui, which, in part, allows the MISC to have a staff of over 30, including four field crews, and to accomplish major achievements such as the pioneering use of helicopters and other means over more than five years to eradicate little fire ants from an area in East Maui; and



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WHEREAS, the O'ahu Invasive Species Committee receives comparably very little funding from the City and has a staff of less than half that of the MISC to conduct survey, control, and education and outreach activities, and, more generally, to take on the invasive species issues for O'ahu left unaddressed by State departments and agencies; and

WHEREAS, the City Council ("Council") has a long and well established record of adopting measures to enhance and protect the local environment and residents' quality of life generally; the Council also has addressed the issue of invasive species, a few examples of which include the prioritization of the use of certain native plants in shoreline and beach parks, support for the establishment of a project to promote awareness of invasive species among farmers, and routinely placing conditions on development approvals under the Council's purview intended to limit the spread of invasive species; and

WHEREAS, City operations—ranging from the maintenance of its many parks and other public lands, operation of extensive infrastructure to provide water to the island and its residents, and management of waste to the regulation of land development—touch nearly every part of the island and, as such, have a significant effect on the spread or prevention and control of invasive species on O'ahu; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu that it recognizes that the counties of Hawai'i have an important role in invasive species control efforts and urges the City Administration to collaboratively advance those efforts in the City and County of Honolulu; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council supports the O'ahu Invasive Species Committee's efforts in conducting survey, control, education and outreach, and other activities in the City; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Administration is requested to report to the Council on the following no later than 180 days after the adoption of this resolution:

1. The City's current and planned efforts related to invasive species control;



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2. The City departments that manage, work on, or affect the land in a way that may contribute to the spread or prevention and control of invasive species;
3. The currently implemented and planned best management practices related to invasive species;
4. The selection of a lead agency for the City's efforts on invasive species, including collaboration with federal, State, local, and non-governmental entities; and
5. The City's recommendations to provide its support to the O'ahu Invasive Species Committee and other entities working to prevent, detect, and control invasive species on O'ahu; and



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BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor, the Mayor, the Managing Director, the Chairperson of the Hawai'i Board of Land and Natural Resources, the Chairperson of the Hawai'i Board of Agriculture, the members of the Hawaii Invasive Species Council, and the Manager of the O'ahu Invasive Species Committee.

INTRODUCED BY:

Esther Kia'aina

Matt Weyer

DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

December 28, 2023
Honolulu, Hawai'i

Councilmembers