
HOUSE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO TAKE ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS TO PROTECT ŌHIA AND OTHER MYRTACEAE FAMILY PLANTS FROM THE DESTRUCTIVE RUST FUNGUS, *PUCCINIA PSIDII*.

1 WHEREAS, in 2005, *Puccinia psidii*, known commonly as ōhia
2 rust in Hawaii and Eucalyptus rust elsewhere, was first
3 discovered in Hawaii on ōhia and other *Myrtaceae* family
4 plants; and

5
6 WHEREAS, the *Puccinia psidii* rust fungus attacks plants
7 in the *Myrtaceae* family of plants; and

8
9 WHEREAS, within months, rust spores spread statewide via
10 wind currents and decimated extensive stands of the non-native
11 rose apple, *Syzygium jambos*, a member of the *Myrtaceae* family;
12 and

13
14 WHEREAS, the virulence of the rust on rose apple, coupled
15 with the rust's potentially broad host range, raised immediate
16 concerns for the health of other plants in the *Myrtaceae* family,
17 including Hawaii's dominant endemic forest tree, ōhia,
18 *Metrosideros polymorpha*; and

19
20 WHEREAS, in 2007, the Hawaii Board of Agriculture
21 unanimously approved a twelve-month interim rule, now expired,
22 restricting domestic importation of plants in the *Myrtaceae*
23 family; and

24
25 WHEREAS, during that interim rule period, the Hawaii
26 Department of Agriculture repeatedly intercepted *Puccinia*
27 *psidii* in cut Myrtle family foliage; and

28
29 WHEREAS, approximately eighty per cent of the native forest
30 in Hawaii is comprised of ōhia; and

31
32 WHEREAS, ōhia is an ecologically, culturally, and
33 economically important plant species; and



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44

WHEREAS, ōhia is critical for capturing and holding precipitation, allowing it to seep into and recharge island aquifers, and as such is essential for watershed health and biodiversity; and

WHEREAS, ōhia serves as habitat for a multitude of native and endemic plant, bird, insect, and snail populations; and

WHEREAS, many of these native populations are federally listed endangered species, such as the ākepa, io, Hawaiian Hawk, and the *Achatinella* and *Partulina* tree snail species; and

WHEREAS, ōhia has considerable religious and cultural value to native Hawaiians, both as a symbol and as a resource for the continuation of many customary and traditional native Hawaiian practices; and

WHEREAS, *Puccinia psidii* currently also represents the gravest threat to Nīoi, *Eugenia koolauensis*, a relative of ōhia that is a federally listed endangered species endemic to Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, ōhia rust's establishment in Hawaii remains limited to a single, distinct strain of *Puccinia psidii*; and

WHEREAS, although the single, distinct strain of *Puccinia psidii* established in Hawaii has not severely affected ōhia, scientific analysis has shown that other strains of *Puccinia psidii* known to exist in other locations can have a particularly virulent impact on ōhia plants; and

WHEREAS, as *Puccinia psidii* spreads geographically, any member of the entire *Myrtaceae* family should be considered a potential host; and

WHEREAS, based on its documented and widespread distribution, *Puccinia psidii* rust spores could reach Hawaii from anywhere in the world on *Myrtaceae* plants or plant parts transported directly or through the continental United States; and

WHEREAS, a recent economic analysis revealed that the local Eucalyptus industry and nursery industry in Hawaii could be

1 substantially damaged by the introduction of additional *Puccinia*
2 *psidii* strains; and

3
4 WHEREAS, microscopic *Puccinia psidii* spores can survive
5 for two to three months and can travel undetected; and

6
7 WHEREAS, if even one more genetic strain reaches Hawaii, the
8 results could be devastating to the structure, composition, and
9 function of native forests as well as to horticultural and
10 agricultural industries that involve *Myrtaceae*; and

11
12 WHEREAS, through formal administrative rulemaking, the
13 Hawaii Department of Agriculture plans to take action to
14 protect ōhia and other important *Myrtaceae* species by reinstating
15 restrictions on *Myrtaceae* family plant imports; and

16
17 WHEREAS, in 2012, the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural
18 Resources filed a petition with the United States Department of
19 Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
20 requesting federal restrictions on foreign imports of *Myrtaceae*
21 family plants to Hawaii under the federal Not Authorized Pending
22 Pest Risk Analysis regulations;

23
24 WHEREAS, the United States Department of Agriculture's
25 Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is currently
26 reviewing the Not Authorized Pending Pest Risk Analysis petition
27 and is also considering interim action to prevent *Puccinia psidii*
28 incursions from foreign sources in conjunction with Department
29 of Agriculture actions; now, therefore,

30
31 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
32 Twenty-seventh Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
33 Session of 2014, that the introduction of new strains of *Puccinia*
34 *psidii* pose a significant threat to native forests and to the
35 horticultural and agricultural industries of Hawaii; and

36
37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
38 is requested to expeditiously adopt a permanent rule
39 restricting importation of plants in the *Myrtaceae* family
40 subject to the procedures outlined in chapter 91, Hawaii Revised
41 Statutes; and

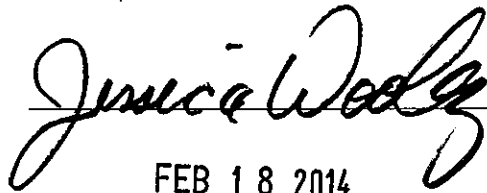
42
43 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, given the high risk to one of
44 Hawaii's dominant native tree species, its fresh water



1 resources, and its agricultural and forest industries, the
2 United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant
3 Health Inspection Service is requested to favorably review and
4 act upon, with all due haste, Hawaii's Not Authorized Pending
5 Pest Risk Analysis petition related to *Puccinia psidii*; and
6

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
8 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor; Attorney General;
9 Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture; Chairperson of the
10 Board of Land and Natural Resources; the members of Hawaii's
11 congressional delegation; the United States Secretary of
12 Agriculture; the Administrator of the United States Department of
13 Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service; the
14 United States Secretary of the Interior; and the Director of the
15 United States Fish and Wildlife Service.
16
17
18

OFFERED BY:



FEB 18 2014

