

MAR 12 2021

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO IDENTIFY HOW COFFEE BERRY BORER AND COFFEE LEAF RUST ENTERED INTO HAWAII AND MEASURES TO PREVENT THE FLOW OF THESE INVASIVE SPECIES INTO THE STATE TO PROTECT THE ONGOING VIABILITY OF HAWAI'I'S COFFEE INDUSTRY.

1 WHEREAS, coffee is ranked by the United States Department
2 of Agriculture (USDA) as Hawaii's second highest value crop and
3 is a highly valued commodity in Hawaii's economy; and
4

5 WHEREAS, according to the 2018 State Agriculture overview
6 published by the USDA, Hawaii produced 5,400,000 pounds (green
7 weight) of coffee grown on seven thousand one hundred acres,
8 with an average yield of 1.92 tons per acre, at a unit price of
9 \$19.40 per pound, for a value of \$50,160,000, demonstrating the
10 high value of this crop to Hawaii's agriculture sector,
11 especially since that value is based on just 0.65 percent of
12 farm acres operated; and
13

14 WHEREAS, quarantine laws within the State should assist in
15 keeping imported plant material out and possible infested stock
16 from entering the State; and
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18 WHEREAS, in 2010, the coffee berry borer, a small beetle
19 that is harmful to coffee crops worldwide, was found to have
20 infested coffee crops in the Kona and Kau regions of Hawaii
21 island and has since been detected on Oahu, Maui, Kauai, and
22 Lanai; and
23

24 WHEREAS, over ninety percent of coffee farms in the Kona
25 region are affected by the coffee berry borer, where every farm
26 in the region has experienced a degree of infestation and
27 secondary infestation, drastically reducing the yield of coffee
28 trees and adversely impacting the quantity and price of coffee
29 from the Kona region; and
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1 WHEREAS, coffee leaf rust exists in the native forest
2 realms of Ethiopia, has spread throughout Indonesia and the
3 entirety of Central and South America; and
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5 WHEREAS, in October 2020, the USDA confirmed the presence
6 of the fungus *Hemileia vastatrix* (coffee leaf rust) in the
7 Holualoa area of the Kona region, and to date coffee leaf rust
8 has been identified in the United States only in Hawaii,
9 especially in Holualoa, Hawaii; Haiku, Maui, and on Lanai; and
10

11 WHEREAS, in February 2021, overall, twenty-five coffee lots
12 across seventeen commercial coffee farms were surveyed, and
13 eleven of the seventeen farms surveyed were positive for coffee
14 leaf rust on both conventional and organic farms; and
15

16 WHEREAS, coffee leaf rust can cause severe defoliation of
17 coffee plants that greatly reduces the photosynthetic capacity
18 of plants and vegetative and berry growth are reduced depending
19 on the intensity of rust in the current year; and
20

21 WHEREAS, long-term effects of coffee leaf rust may include
22 dieback, which would likely have a significant impact on the
23 following year's yield, with some researchers estimating losses
24 between thirty percent and eighty percent if left unchecked; and
25

26 WHEREAS, while the establishment and management of this
27 fungus in other regions presents the opportunity to utilize
28 existing science and tools to respond to the fungus such as
29 planting resistant cultivars, changing climate conditions have
30 resulted in once resistant variants to now be susceptible to
31 coffee leaf rust; and
32

33 WHEREAS, the infestation of coffee farms by the coffee
34 berry borer and coffee leaf rust threatens to dismantle Hawaii's
35 coffee industry because of the nature and speed of the
36 infestations; and
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38 WHEREAS, as the State is called upon to assist the effort
39 to combat both the coffee berry borer and coffee leaf rust, it
40 is imperative that this body be provided with a clear
41 understanding of how they were introduced so that the costs of



1 mitigation can be fairly shared among the responsible parties;
2 now, therefore,

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4 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first
5 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021, the
6 House of Representatives concurring, that this body urges the
7 Department of Agriculture to trace the introduction of coffee
8 berry borer and coffee leaf rust into Hawaii and determine what
9 role the importation of green coffee from regions with known
10 infestations played in the introduction of these pests, and what
11 risks the continued importation of green coffee poses to the
12 ongoing viability of Hawaii's coffee industry; and

13
14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
15 shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations,
16 including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later
17 than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session
18 of 2022; and

19
20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the report should include a
21 discussion of the following topics:

- 22 (1) The existing statutory and administrative measures
- 23 that sought to prevent the importation of coffee berry
- 24 borer and coffee leaf rust;
- 25
- 26 (2) Ways that coffee berry borer and coffee leaf rust were
- 27 imported to the State;
- 28
- 29 (3) New monitoring and effective quarantine strategies and
- 30 best management practices, including field sanitation,
- 31 proper pruning, fertility, coffee leaf monitoring, and
- 32 early detection;
- 33
- 34 (4) Outreach strategies and community engagement for the
- 35 development, education, and dissemination of these
- 36 measures for coffee farmers, especially for those who
- 37 live near their farms; and
- 38
- 39 (5) The extent that these new measures could protect those
- 40 living in Hawaii's coffee growing regions from the
- 41



1 cumulative impacts of ongoing exposure to pesticides;
2 and
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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
5 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the
6 Board of Agriculture and Dean of the College of Tropical
7 Agriculture and Human Resources of the University of Hawaii.
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OFFERED BY: _____

Jana Acasio

