
SENATE 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
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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
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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 vasatrix* (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 on Hawaii island were
13 surveyed, and eleven of the seventeen farms surveyed tested
14 positive for coffee leaf rust on both conventional and organic
15 farms; and

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

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

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

33
34 WHEREAS, the infestation of coffee farms by the coffee
35 berry borer and coffee leaf rust threatens to dismantle Hawaii's
36 coffee industry because of the nature and speed of the
37 infestations; and

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39 WHEREAS, as the State is called upon to assist the effort
40 to combat both the coffee berry borer and coffee leaf rust, it
41 is imperative that this body be provided with a clear
42 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,
6 that this body urges the Hawaii Department of Agriculture to
7 trace the introduction of coffee berry borer and coffee leaf
8 rust into Hawaii and determine what role the importation of
9 green coffee from regions with known infestations played in the
10 introduction of these pests, and what risks the continued
11 importation of green coffee poses to the ongoing viability of
12 Hawaii's coffee industry; and
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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
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20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the report should include a
21 discussion of the following topics:
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- 23 (1) The existing statutory and administrative measures
24 that sought to prevent the importation of coffee berry
25 borer and coffee leaf rust;
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- 27 (2) Ways that coffee berry borer and coffee leaf rust were
28 imported to the State;
29
- 30 (3) New monitoring and effective quarantine strategies and
31 best management practices, including field sanitation,
32 proper pruning, fertility, coffee leaf monitoring, and
33 early detection;
34
- 35 (4) Outreach strategies and community engagement for the
36 development, education, and dissemination of these
37 measures for coffee farmers, especially for those who
38 live near their farms; and
39
- 40 (5) The extent that these new measures could protect those
41 living in Hawaii's coffee growing regions from the



1 cumulative impacts of ongoing exposure to pesticides;
2 and

3
4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
5 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of
6 Agriculture, and Dean of the University of Hawaii College of
7 Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources.

