

JAN 20 2023

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the albizia tree is
2 an invasive species that can grow up to one hundred fifty feet
3 tall. The tree adapts to grow in nutrient deficient soils,
4 produces large quantities of wind-dispersed seeds, and grows at
5 a very rapid rate, gaining up to fifteen feet in height each
6 year. It can very quickly disrupt and replace native ecosystems
7 and can easily take over a cleared area in just a few years.
8 The tree is currently widespread on Kauai, Oahu, Maui, and
9 Hawaii Island, and is also established on Lanai.

10 The legislature further finds that albizia trees have very
11 brittle trunks and limbs that are structurally weak and are
12 prone to "sudden limb shear," a phenomenon in which live
13 branches collapse without warning or apparent cause. These
14 collapses can occur even if the tree appears to be healthy.
15 This phenomenon, combined with the tree's large size and fast
16 growth, gives the tree the potential to cause major damage to
17 property, infrastructure, and even human lives.



1 The dangers posed by albizia trees were made clear in
2 August 2014, when strong winds from tropical storm Iselle
3 toppled thousands of albizia trees in Puna, blocking roads and
4 disrupting power lines. This caused tens of thousands of people
5 to be stranded in Puna for weeks without power and made it
6 difficult for first responders to access people in need of
7 emergency services. Surveys found that much of the storm
8 damage, which was estimated to cost between \$148,000,000 and
9 \$325,00,000, could be attributed to albizia trees.

10 The legislature finds that the State must make a long-term
11 investment of resources now to prevent future natural disasters
12 from being aggravated by albizia trees.

13 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to appropriate
14 funds for the removal of hazard albizia trees that potentially
15 threaten public and private land.

16 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
17 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
18 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2023-2024 and
19 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
20 year 2024-2025 to allow the division of forestry and wildlife to



1 coordinate the removal of hazard albizia trees that potentially
2 threaten public and private land.

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

5 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2023.

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INTRODUCED BY: _____

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. R. ...', written over a horizontal line.

S.B. NO. 948

Report Title:

Department of Land and Natural Resources; Division of Forestry and Wildlife; Albizia Trees; Invasive Species; Appropriation

Description:

Appropriates funds to allow the Division of Forestry and Wildlife to coordinate the removal of hazard albizia trees that potentially threaten public and private land.

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