
HOUSE CONCURRENT 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

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

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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

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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

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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

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

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



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2 WHEREAS, ōhia is an ecologically, culturally, and
3 economically important plant species; and
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5 WHEREAS, ōhia is critical for capturing and holding
6 precipitation, allowing it to seep into and recharge island
7 aquifers, and as such is essential for watershed health and
8 biodiversity; and
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10 WHEREAS, ōhia serves as habitat for a multitude of native
11 and endemic plant, bird, insect, and snail populations; and
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13 WHEREAS, many of these native populations are federally
14 listed endangered species, such as the ākepa, io, Hawaiian Hawk,
15 and the *Achatinella* and *Partulina* tree snail species; and
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17 WHEREAS, ōhia has considerable religious and cultural value
18 to native Hawaiians, both as a symbol and as a resource for the
19 continuation of many customary and traditional native Hawaiian
20 practices; and
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22 WHEREAS, *Puccinia psidii* currently also represents the
23 gravest threat to Nioi, *Eugenia koolauensis*, a relative of
24 ōhia that is a federally listed endangered species endemic to
25 Hawaii; and
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27 WHEREAS, ōhia rust's establishment in Hawaii remains limited
28 to a single, distinct strain of *Puccinia psidii*; and
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30 WHEREAS, although the single, distinct strain of *Puccinia*
31 *psidii* established in Hawaii has not severely affected ōhia,
32 scientific analysis has shown that other strains of *Puccinia*
33 *psidii* known to exist in other locations can have a particularly
34 virulent impact on ōhia plants; and
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36 WHEREAS, as *Puccinia psidii* spreads geographically, any
37 member of the entire *Myrtaceae* family should be considered a
38 potential host; and
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40 WHEREAS, based on its documented and widespread
41 distribution, *Puccinia psidii* rust spores could reach Hawaii
42 from anywhere in the world on *Myrtaceae* plants or plant parts
43 transported directly or through the continental United States;
44 and



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2 WHEREAS, a recent economic analysis revealed that the local
3 Eucalyptus industry and nursery industry in Hawaii could be
4 substantially damaged by the introduction of additional *Puccinia*
5 *psidii* strains; and

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7 WHEREAS, microscopic *Puccinia psidii* spores can survive
8 for two to three months and can travel undetected; and

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

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

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

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

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34 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
35 Twenty-seventh Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
36 Session of 2014, the Senate concurring, that the introduction of
37 new strains of *Puccinia psidii* pose a significant threat to
38 native forests and to the horticultural and agricultural
39 industries of Hawaii; and

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41 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Agriculture
42 is requested to expeditiously adopt a permanent rule
43 restricting importation of plants in the *Myrtaceae* family

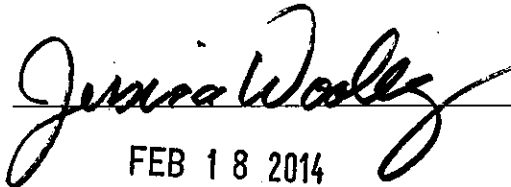


1 subject to the procedures outlined in chapter 91, Hawaii Revised
2 Statutes; and

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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, given the high risk to one of
5 Hawaii's dominant native tree species, its fresh water
6 resources, and its agricultural and forest industries, the
7 United States Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant
8 Health Inspection Service is requested to favorably review and
9 act upon, with all due haste, Hawaii's Not Authorized Pending
10 Pest Risk Analysis petition related to *Puccinia psidii*; and

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

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23 OFFERED BY:


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