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

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

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

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

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

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

WHEREAS, approximately eighty per cent of the native forest in Hawaii is comprised of *ōhia*; and
WHEREAS, ōhia is an ecologically, culturally, and economically important plant species; and

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 Nioi, 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 substantially damaged by the introduction of additional Puccinia psidii strains; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

OFFERED BY:

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