

Resolution

No. _____

SUPPORTING SAFE, EFFECTIVE BIOLOGICAL CONTROL FOR MAUI COUNTY'S FOREST PESTS

WHEREAS, Hawai'i is one of the most isolated places on Earth and its isolation and age have created an array of ecosystems with unique biota on each of the Hawaiian Islands, and

WHEREAS, Hawaiian forests are known worldwide for their scientific, cultural, and aesthetic importance, and

WHEREAS, the native forests of Maui County support numerous plant and animal species found nowhere else in the world which are known worldwide as extraordinary examples of speciation and adaptation, and

WHEREAS, Maui's native ecosystems include watershed forests which help capture, retain, and purify potable water, and a pure, reliable water source is essential to Maui County's continued economic health and development, and

WHEREAS, non-native plants and animals brought to our islands now occur to such an extent that much of our native forests might be lost in the next century, and

WHEREAS, mechanical and chemical methods are currently being used to control and contain economically and environmentally damaging invasive species, these control methods could be substantially more effective with the complementary use of biocontrol, and

WHEREAS, appropriate biological control agents can reduce the vigor of a select few invaders whose explosive growth is based in part on the absence of natural predators, and

WHEREAS, land managers and scientists are in general consensus that without increased biological control efforts Maui will likely lose the fight against many ecosystem-modifying weeds, and

WHEREAS, strawberry guava, Koster's curse, miconia, and Himalayan ginger will likely displace much of Maui's native rain forests without biological control, and

WHEREAS, efforts to control the non-native invaders that threaten Maui's forests also have tremendous potential to help Maui's cattle industry in the battle against pasture invaders such as gorse and fireweed, which have reduced the forage potential of thousands of acres of rangeland, and

WHEREAS, case examples of unsuccessful biological control attempts, such as the mongoose, warrant consideration; however, these early releases of biocontrol agents occurred in the absence of appropriate standards or testing of efficacy and non-target impacts, and

WHEREAS, Hawai'i has been a world leader in the development, testing, and application of biological control, largely due to the heroic efforts of the early Hawai'i Sugar Planters Association, and these efforts resulted in effective control of terrible pests such as the Australian fern weevil, Maui pamakani and Hamakua pamakani, lantana, panini, and others, and

WHEREAS, more recently, banana poka, formerly one of the most feared of forest weeds, has been reduced to "just another plant in the forest" because of the biological control agent *Septoria* fungus, developed by Hawai'i Department of Agriculture and University of Hawai'i scientists in the 1990s, and

WHEREAS, rigorous exploration and host-range testing in native ranges are necessary to isolate organisms which can be released safely into Hawai'i, and

WHEREAS, many of the same invasive weed species that threaten Maui County also threaten other forests worldwide and increasingly an international coalition is investigating the potential of safe biological control; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Maui:

1. That it recognizes the importance of saving the native forests of Maui County for the water resources, cultural, biological and economic benefits they yield in Maui County, and
2. That it acknowledges the potential hazards of biocontrol but also recognizes the profound danger posed by non-action at this critical juncture, and
3. That it supports increased funding for required quarantine infrastructure and research for exploration, testing, and release of organisms to assist in control of Maui forest pests; and
4. That certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Mayor of the County of Maui, Hawai'i Department of Agriculture, Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources, University of Hawai'i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station, Hawai'i Invasive Species Council, and Maui Invasive Species Committee.

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGALITY:

Deputy Corporation Counsel
County of Maui