

COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI
PLANNING COMMITTEE

March 20, 2009

**Committee
Report No.**

09-30

Honorable Chair and Members
of the County Council
County of Maui
Wailuku, Maui, Hawaii

Chair and Members:

Your Planning Committee, having met on March 2, 2009, makes reference to County Communication No. 08-73, from the Mayor, transmitting a proposed resolution entitled "SUPPORTING SAFE, EFFECTIVE BIOLOGICAL CONTROL FOR MAUI COUNTY'S FOREST PESTS".

The purpose of the proposed resolution is to express a commitment to saving native forests through biological control.

Your Committee received information on the existing and potential harm to Maui County's forests caused by biological pests from the County's Environmental Coordinator; Mark White, Ph.D., of The Nature Conservancy of Hawaii; and Arthur Medeiros, Ph.D., of the United States Geological Survey. Dr. Medeiros provided a computer-generated presentation to explain the issues. They advised your Committee that substantial public investment in biological control is needed to combat forest pests. Without such a commitment, they said, Maui County's forests will be decimated.

Your Committee expressed its grave concern with the issues presented. Your Committee voted to incorporate nonsubstantive revisions to the proposed resolution.

Your Committee voted 6-0 to recommend adoption of the proposed resolution, as revised, and filing of the communication. Committee Chair Kaho`ohalahala, Vice-Chair Johnson, and members Baisa, Medeiros, Molina, and Nishiki voted "aye". Committee member Victorino was excused.

Your Committee is in receipt of a revised proposed resolution, approved as to form and legality by the Department of the Corporation Counsel, incorporating its revisions.

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Your Planning Committee RECOMMENDS the following:

1. That Resolution No. _____, as revised herein and attached hereto, entitled "SUPPORTING SAFE, EFFECTIVE BIOLOGICAL CONTROL FOR MAUI COUNTY'S FOREST PESTS", be ADOPTED; and

2. That County Communication No. 08-73 be FILED.

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Adoption of this report is respectfully requested.



SOL P. KAHO'OHALAHALA, Chair

pc:cr:09034aa:dmr

Resolution

No. _____

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

WHEREAS, Hawaii 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 that are found nowhere else in the world and that are known worldwide as extraordinary examples of speciation and adaptation; and

WHEREAS, Maui County's native ecosystems include watershed forests that help capture, retain, and purify potable water; and

WHEREAS, 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, which are currently being used to control and contain economically and environmentally damaging invasive species, 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 County 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 County's native rain forests without biological control; and

WHEREAS, efforts to control the non-native invaders that threaten Maui County's forests also have tremendous potential to help Maui County'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, Hawaii has been a world leader in the development, testing, and application of biological control, largely due to the heroic efforts of the early Hawaii 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 the State Department of Agriculture and University of Hawaii scientists in the 1990s; and

WHEREAS, rigorous exploration and host-range testing in native ranges are necessary to isolate organisms that can be released safely into Hawaii; and

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

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

1. That it hereby recognizes the importance of saving the native forests of Maui County for the water resources and cultural, biological, and economic benefits they yield in Maui County; and
2. That it acknowledges the potential hazards of biocontrol and 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 County forest pests; and
4. That certified copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor of the County of Maui; the State Department of Agriculture; the State Department of Land and Natural Resources; the University of Hawaii, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources; the United States Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station; the Hawaii Invasive Species Council; and the Maui Invasive Species Committee.