

COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI
PARKS AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

November 4, 2005

Committee
Report No.

05-151

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

Chair and Members:

Your Parks and Economic Development Committee, having met on October 20, 2005, makes reference to the following:

1. County Communication No. 04-156, from Councilmember Jo Anne Johnson, relating to stronger protective measures for Maui County's agriculture industry; and
2. Miscellaneous Communication dated July 28, 2004, from the County Clerk, attaching a copy of Parks and Agriculture Committee Report No. 04-188, As Amended, recommending that (1) the proposed resolution entitled "URGING STATE AND COUNTY OFFICIALS TO PROTECT THE AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY FROM INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES" be adopted; and (2) the matter of protecting the agriculture industry from invasive alien species be referred to the Parks and Agriculture Committee. Committee Report No. 04-188 was adopted at the Council Meeting of July 27, 2004 (Resolution No. 04-111).

Your Committee notes that County Communication No. 04-156 was referred to the prior Council's Parks and Agriculture Committee at the Council meeting of June 18, 2004.

Your Committee further notes that the Miscellaneous Communication dated July 28, 2004 was referred to the prior Council's Parks and Agriculture Committee at the Council meeting of July 27, 2004.

At its meeting of December 2, 2004, the Parks and Agriculture Committee recommended that County Communication No. 04-156 and the Miscellaneous Communication be referred to the Council Chair for the term beginning January 2, 2005, for a recommendation as to referral or other disposition.

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At its meeting of January 21, 2005, the Council referred County Communication No. 04-156 and the Miscellaneous Communication to your Parks and Economic Development Committee (County Communication No. 05-12).

By correspondence dated October 3, 2005, the Environmental Coordinator, Office of the Mayor, requested an opportunity to provide a comprehensive update to your Committee regarding current efforts to control the Erythrina gall wasp and other invasive species, in collaboration with various partner agencies and organizations.

By correspondence dated October 10, 2005, the Chair of your Committee transmitted photographs from Joe FellMcDonald, depicting native wiliwili trees infested with the Erythrina gall wasp and located halfway up the Ahihi Reserve.

By correspondence dated October 12, 2005, the Chair of your Committee transmitted supporting documentation and various news articles from the *Star Bulletin*, *The Maui News*, and the *Honolulu Advertiser* on the impact invasive species have had on Hawaii's native ecosystems.

By correspondence dated October 13, 2005, the Chair of your Committee transmitted a proposed resolution entitled "URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO SUPPORT TIGHTENED AGRICULTURAL INSPECTIONS FOR INCOMING CARGO AND PASSENGERS TO HAWAII". The purpose of the proposed resolution is to support House Resolution No. 3468 directing the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Interior to "implement a comprehensive system in Hawaii of post-arrival protocols for all persons, baggage, cargo, containers, packing materials, and other items traveling or being shipped to Hawaii from domestic or foreign locations".

At its meeting, your Committee met with the Environmental Coordinator, Office of the Mayor; an Agricultural Specialist, Office of Economic Development; a Deputy Corporation Counsel; Teya Penniman, Manager, Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC); Alex Michailidis, Project Coordinator, East Maui Watershed Partnership (EMWP); Stuart Funke-D'Egnuff, Program Manager, Tri-Isle Resource Conservation & Development Council of Hawaii (Tri-Isle RC&D); and Art Medeiros, Research Biologist, United States Geological Survey (USGS).

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Your Committee received public testimony from two individuals. The Watershed Coordinator from the West Maui Mountains Watershed Partnership (WMMWP) expressed support for the proposed resolution and provided an overview of his agency's efforts to protect the West Maui Mountains' watershed and its resources. He stated that the WMMWP manages approximately 50,000 acres in the watershed, where 126 rare and endemic species alone are found. The Watershed Coordinator acknowledged a direct partnership with the County of Maui, which funds a portion of their program.

The County Arborist discussed a weed risk assessment system conducted in Hawaii on landscaping plants. The assessment was designed to assist in identifying plants for their invasiveness or potential to become invasive in Hawaii. He stated his desire to have the weed risk assessment system implemented in policies regarding invasive species.

Your Committee received the following documents:

1. Correspondence dated October 20, 2005, from Kenneth Yamamura, Agricultural Specialist, Office of Economic Development, expressing support for the proposed resolution.
2. Correspondence from Rob Parsons, Environmental Coordinator, Office of the Mayor, entitled "County of Maui Invasive Species Expenditures-FY06".
3. Correspondence from David Sakoda, County Arborist, Department of Parks and Recreation, entitled "Weed Risk Assessment, A Tool for Selecting Non-Invasive Species for Forestry, Gardening and Landscaping in Hawaii".
4. Hard copy of a computer generated slideshow presentation from Alex Michailidis, Project Coordinator, EMWP.

The Environmental Coordinator provided your Committee with a status update on the Administration's efforts to combat invasive species in Maui County. He noted that while the County is only several months into the FY 2006 budget, already, approximately \$1.2 million is projected to be spent for invasive species control. In comparison, the total funds dedicated to invasive species in FY 2005 was \$1.43 million. He indicated that the County works in direct partnership with many agencies involved in invasive species

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control, including MISC offices on Maui and Molokai, WMMWP, Tri-Isle RC&D, USGS, The Nature Conservancy, Pu'u Kukui Watershed, EMWP, and the State Department of Agriculture, among others. The Environmental Coordinator also provided photographs of native wiliwili trees and samples of wiliwili leaves infected with the Erythrina gall wasp.

Your Committee received presentations from various partner agencies and organizations involved in invasive species control.

Ms. Penniman discussed MISC's efforts to combat invasive species in Maui County. She stated that her organization deals with invasive species on an island-wide basis rather than being site-specific. She identified target invasive species on Maui, Lanai, and Molokai and explained that threats to the environment, economy, or quality of life, the feasibility to control an invasive species, and the costs associated with controlling it, are factors that help to determine whether an invasive species becomes a target species. She identified Maui County as a leader in funding invasive species control programs.

Mr. Michailidis provided your Committee with a brief overview of the EMWP program and their role in combating invasive species. Feral pigs, kahili ginger, tibouchina, clidemia, and strawberry guava are examples of the continual threats that affect the functionality of the watershed. He stated that well-managed forests almost always promote cleaner, safer water with less sediment and fewer pollutants. Thus, efforts to contain threats to the watershed are essential to protecting water quality. He further stated that the County of Maui, in a direct partnership with EMWP, provides the organization with a portion of funds to assist them with their program's efforts.

Mr. Medeiros, from the USGS, discussed the evolution of invasive species as a direct result of globalization. He provided a timeline on the development of the Erythrina gall wasp invasion on Maui and provided a brief overview of the negative effects it has had on Hawaii's native ecosystems, specifically on the native wiliwili tree. He stressed that increased protection of incoming cargo and passengers to Hawaii must be implemented in order to protect the local economy, agriculture, native ecosystems, and quality of life from future invasive species.

Mr. Funke-D'Egnuff, from the Tri-Isle RC&D, reiterated the need for tightened Federal inspections for incoming cargo and passengers to Hawaii and expressed support for the proposed resolution.

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Your Committee supported the proposed resolution; however, recommended that the resolution be revised to add that the County expended over \$1 million towards invasive species control efforts in FY 2005.

Your Committee voted to recommend adoption of the revised proposed resolution.

Your Committee is in receipt of a revised proposed resolution entitled "URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO SUPPORT TIGHTENED AGRICULTURAL INSPECTIONS FOR INCOMING CARGO AND PASSENGERS TO HAWAII", incorporating your Committee's suggested revisions.

Your Parks and Economic Development Committee **RECOMMENDS** that Resolution No. _____, attached hereto, entitled "URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO SUPPORT TIGHTENED AGRICULTURAL INSPECTIONS FOR INCOMING CARGO AND PASSENGERS TO HAWAII" be **ADOPTED**.

Adoption of this report is respectfully requested.

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