

DRAFT

WHEREAS, the Hawai‘i State Constitution provides that “the State shall conserve and protect agricultural lands, promote diversified agriculture, increase agricultural self-sufficiency and assure the availability of agriculturally suitable lands;” and

WHEREAS, the Constitution further mandates that “the State shall provide for the protection and promotion of the public health;” and

WHEREAS, restricted use pesticides (RUPs) applied as fumigants—such as 1,3-Dichloropropene and Metam Sodium—are heavily used in Hawai‘i, particularly in Central O‘ahu, and are known to cause serious environmental and health harms, including soil depletion, groundwater contamination, cancer, respiratory illness, and nausea; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) requires that pesticides be used only in accordance with label directions, including weather restrictions meant to minimize drift and protect public health; and

WHEREAS, Act 45 (2018) requires annual reporting of RUP use; however, applicators are not required to disclose key data such as time of application, dilution rate, or crop, making it easier to disregard label directions, effectively nullifying FIFRA protections; and

WHEREAS, this loophole undermines even the limited 100-foot buffer zone around schools during school hours, since applicators are not required to report when spraying occurs; and

WHEREAS, even if enforced, a 100-foot buffer zone is inadequate because harmful RUPs such as Metam Sodium are known to drift as far as one mile, and are believed to travel even farther; and

WHEREAS, across Hawai‘i, just ten users accounted for over 99 percent of all reported RUP use in 2019, and notably, only about half of these operations produce food for local consumption, demonstrating that the largest perpetrators of pesticide harms are multinational chemical and agricultural corporations that exploit Hawai‘i’s lands, absorb small fines as a cost of doing business, and move on once the ‘āina has been damaged, leaving local communities to bear the costs; and

WHEREAS, Hawai‘i currently has 146 USDA-certified organic farms, which show the State’s potential to return to agricultural sustainability and self-sufficiency if public policy supports organic farming; and

WHEREAS, organic deterrents have proven effective against specific pests such as the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB), because they target pests directly, avoid broad collateral damage, and prevent the “pesticide treadmill” in which repeated chemical use creates pesticide-resistant pests; and

WHEREAS, general-use pesticides such as neonicotinoids—which cause serious harm to native pollinators and environmental health—are used widely in Hawai‘i but remain exempt from reporting requirements, leaving their impacts largely unmonitored and unchecked; and

WHEREAS, the spread of invasive species such as the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle has led to even greater pesticide use, particularly neonicotinoids, despite the availability of proven sustainable alternatives such as pyrethrins, netting, mulch management, trapping, and biological controls, including *Metarhizium anisopliae*;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the State of Hawai‘i prioritize comprehensive pesticide reform in the 2026 legislative session by requiring detailed pesticide use reports, strengthening enforcement with meaningful fines and penalties, and reclassifying harmful general-use pesticides such as neonicotinoids as restricted use pesticides to ensure transparency and accountability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature expand pesticide buffer zones and establish them not only near schools but also near homes, hospitals, parks, and playgrounds, with strong enforcement mechanisms to protect keiki and immunocompromised individuals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State require regular soil and water testing to assess pesticide-related environmental damage and mandate that agricultural landowners disclose pesticide use, soil quality, and environmental impacts when selling property; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Hawai‘i Department of Agriculture, the Department of Biosecurity, and the University of Hawai‘i conduct research on emerging organic solutions, including *Metarhizium anisopliae*, to validate and expand the availability of sustainable alternatives to chemical pesticides; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture, the Mayors of the Counties, the Chairs and members of the County Councils, the Commission on Water Resource Management, the Board of Water Supply, the University of Hawai‘i College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources, the Department of Health, and the Department of Education.