

State of Hawai`i
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
Division of Forestry and Wildlife
Honolulu, Hawai`i 96813
May 26, 2009

Chairperson and Members
Natural Area Reserves System Commission
State of Hawai`i
Honolulu, Hawai`i

NARS Commission Members:

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF PROTECTING THE DOMINANT FOREST PLANTS OF HAWAI`I, AND TO WRITE A LETTER TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE URGING THEM TO DEVELOP RULES AND REGULATIONS TO FURTHER PROTECT THEM.

BACKGROUND:

The past few years have seen a rise in pests that pose a threat to the native forest, and any decline of these forests would profoundly affect the plant communities/ecosystems and the assemblage of other plant and animal species that depend on them for survival. Regulating at the family or level is also important; since pathogens, such as *Puccinia psidii* (guava rust), have the demonstrated ability to attack several genera of the Myrtle family (*Myrtaceae*, of which native `ohi`a and non-native eucalyptus used in forestry, are members). The following list of genera has been assembled by a number of field staff across many private and government agencies: *Metrosideros* (`ohi`a), *Acacia* (koa), *Sophora* (mamane), *Myoporum* (naio), *Erythrina* (wiliwili), *Diospyros* (lama), *Styphelia* (pukiawe), *Dodonaea* (a`ali`i), *Pandanus* (hala), *Cheirodendron* (olapa), *Vaccinium* (`ohelo), *Scaevola* (naupaka), ferns *Cibotium* (hapu`u) and *Dicranopteris* (uluhe), and the subalpine grass *Deschampsia*.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

While there have been discussions about such invaders at past Commission Meetings, it is becoming clear that a concerted effort needs to be done protect these species; Commission and staff members are willing and able to provide input into the rulemaking process that must come from the Hawai`i Department of Agriculture (HDOA), and they in turn should be asked to work with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to avoid federal pre-emption of any new State plant import rules that are stricter than theirs.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the NARS Commission approve and recommend that a letter be sent through the Board of Land and Natural Resources, or its authorized representative, to the Department of Agriculture and the Board of Agriculture for their review and further action.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty Sapre, NARSC
Executive Secretary

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