

Hawai'i Interagency Biosecurity Plan June 2020 Spotlight

Biosecurity & COVID-19: Building Capacity in an Economic Downturn

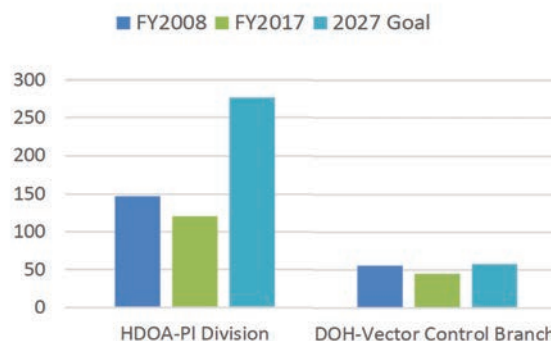
The Biosecurity Plan was developed in large part as a response to the previous economic downturn, when many biosecurity programs were reduced. We have since learned the costly lesson that investments in biosecurity save money in avoided damages and control efforts.

As we face a new downturn due to COVID-19, the Biosecurity Plan framework suggests the following priorities in order to weather this trying period:

1. **Maintain critical civil service capacity**, especially biosecurity positions at HDOA, DOH Vector Control, and conservation positions at DLNR.
2. **Maintain critical non-civil service capacity** at the UH Invasive Species Committees and Watershed Partnerships through funding to HISC and Watershed Partnership Program.
3. **Stay on track in planned growth areas.** The Plan identifies critical new positions needed as soon as possible for HDOA electronic import manifesting and ship ballast water & biofouling inspection by the DLNR Division of Aquatic Resources.
4. **We can grow rather than shrink.** Biosecurity programs have plentiful shovel-ready work and can help stimulate job growth. DLNR and the HISC are compiling hundreds of potential job stimulus ideas relating to invasive species that can put people back to work in short-term positions. Contact Chelsea.L.Arnott@hawaii.gov for more information.

Hawaii's biosecurity capacity is still recovering from the 2008 economic downturn.

A Reduction-in-Force (RIF) was implemented due to the 2008 economic downturn. Biosecurity programs like the HDOA Plant Quarantine Branch and the DOH Vector Control Branch were hit particularly hard with cuts to positions and funding. When the Biosecurity Plan was written **nine years later, these programs still had not rebounded from the Reduction-in-Force.**



The coconut rhinoceros beetle arrived in Hawai'i in 2013. PC: plantwise.org

The impacts of this capacity loss were profound. When Hawai'i Island experienced an outbreak of **dengue fever** in 2015, Department of Health had to respond without a full Vector Control Branch. The branch was reinstated a year later.

In the years following the RIF, substantial new pest incursions occurred in Hawai'i, including **coconut rhinoceros beetle**, **Asian hornail wasp**, and **naio thrips**. This was also a time of spread for **Little Fire Ants** and **Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death**.

Hawai'i Interagency Biosecurity Plan

An investment in Hawaii's Future

What is biosecurity?

Biosecurity is the full set of measures taken to manage the risk from invasive species. This includes risks to agriculture, environment, economy, and the health of Hawaii's people.

The Hawai'i Interagency Biosecurity Plan (HIBP)

The HIBP looks for gaps in our biosecurity system, which consists of a network of State agencies and partners mitigating impacts of invasive species. The HIBP includes 147 actions to increase our capacity to protect Hawai'i.

What Do We Spend?

\$57M/yr in current biosecurity expenditures across all agencies (0.4% of the state budget)

What More Do We Need?

\$37.8M/yr in additional funding would support every action item in the HIBP (0.3% of the budget)

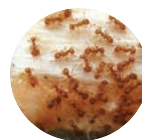
What Do We Save?

There are thousands of species that have invaded (and thousands more that could invade) Hawai'i. Here are just a few.



By funding inspectors at HDOA, we save **\$2B every year in potential damages from brown treesnake**

By funding the UH Invasive Species Committees, we can reduce **the \$672M that we lose to miconia every year**



By funding the Hawai'i Ant Lab, we reduce the **\$174M yearly damages from little fire ant** on Hawai'i Island alone

Biosecurity protects our economy...



Ag production: \$680M/yr



Tourism: \$15B/yr



Floriculture: \$69M/yr

...and our way of life in the islands.

Reefs



Healthy watersheds



Native species



Healthy keiki