



# University of Hawaii at Manoa

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## HB 1652 RELATING TO AN APPROPRIATION TO PROTECT NATIVE FLORA

Statement for  
House Committee on  
Planning, Energy and Environmental Protection  
Public Hearing - February 16, 1989

By  
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HB 1652 would provide funds to the Governor's Agricultural Coordinating Committee for the purpose of controlling the spread of two noxious weeds, strawberry guava or Waiwi (Psidium cattianum) and Miconia grandis. Our statement on this bill does not represent an institutional position of the University of Hawaii.

Waiwi has been classified as among the worst weeds in the state by several authorities on agricultural and native organism conservation. Introduced in 1825 from Brazil it escaped within 5 years and is even today invading new areas that have been disturbed in some way. The trees infest over 600,000 acres on the Big Island alone; the total statewide infestation exceeds 1,100,000 acres. Conventional control techniques are therefore impossible. Biological control is the only feasible approach. The National Park Service, through the CPSU (a cooperative research program between the National Park Service and the University of Hawaii Department of Botany through which the National Park Service sponsors various research programs for about \$600,000 p.a.), commissioned an exploratory study in the Brazilian state of Parana and Santa Catarina. The plant was easily located. Numerous insect species with good potential for biological control were observed. No suitable plant pathogens were noted. An immensely encouraging result was the discovery of several areas where waiwi and the common guava grew side by side. Preliminary observations indicated that there were several insects which were specific to waiwi and did not affect the common guava. This encouraging result needs to be pursued as does the need for greater understanding of the ecology of the species. Due to foreign travel budget restrictions the National Park Service is not able to continue this phase of the study. This bill would remove that obstacle and enable the National Park Service in cooperation with the State to continue other aspects of the program which are dependent on this Brazilian research.

Miconia, a close relative of Clidemia, is a relatively recent importation from Central America. Its history in Tahiti is cause for great concern to all people concerned with the conservation of Hawaii's unique natural heritage. It also poses an enormous threat to plantations and ranches throughout the state.

Thus we concur with the intent of HB 1652 to provide the much needed funds for controlling these plant pests.

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