



# Hawaii Invasive Species Council

## “HISC Boosts Funds for Agriculture Inspectors”

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HISC eNews, Vol. 3, No. 6

October 2009

The Hawaii Invasive Species Council has approved a 2010 state fiscal year budget to support cooperative efforts to develop and implement a statewide program to prevent, detect and control invasive species. The HISC \$2 million budget is a 50% reduction from 2009. The largest project supported was a \$600,000 transfer to the Hawaii Department of Agriculture to maintain quarantine inspectors at risk of state layoffs.

Projects were proposed in public meetings of all of the working groups and selected for consideration. The Resources Working Group, chaired by the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, then met with working group chairs in a public meeting on September 17, 2009 to allocate funds to the program areas based on the project requests.

The HISC allocation allows HDOA to maintain quarantine inspection services at all ports statewide to minimize disruption of agricultural, food and shipping industries. Critical functions will include inspection of incoming cargo from Guam to minimize the risk of brown treesnake introductions, as well as inspection of food products and animal feed. This transfer is a significant policy change for HISC and is seen as an emergency measure until other solutions are found.

HDOA provides the frontline in defense against invasive species which pose the single greatest threat to Hawaii's economy, natural environment and public health. The department has begun collecting funds available by the passage of the Pest Inspection, Quarantine and Eradication Fee (PIQE) to currently fund 30 staff members. HDOA expects \$1.3 million will be released from the fee to prevent loss of inspectors.

Further authority to ensure uniform participation



*HDOA priorities will include inspection of incoming cargo from Guam to minimize the risk of brown treesnake introductions, as well as inspection of food products and animal feed.*

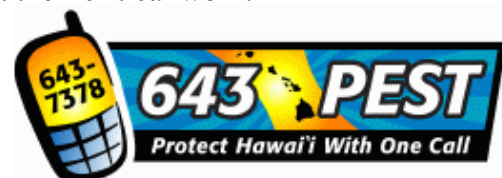
—photo courtesy HDOA

will help create a dedicated source of funding tied to the amount of cargo entering Hawaii's ports.

To protect Hawaii's fragile ecosystems and their more than 10,000 species of native plants and animals that exist nowhere else on Earth, a dedicated funding mechanism was created for the Natural Area Partnership Program, the Natural Area Reserves, the Watershed Partnerships Program, and the Youth Conservation Corps through the tax paid on conveyances of land (HRS §247-7). These revenues are deposited into the Natural Area Reserve (NAR) Special Fund, established by HRS §195-9, which supports land management actions on six major islands and engages over 60 public-private landowners, partners and agencies. This is also the source of funding for the special funds that support the HISC programs.

The actual amount available to the HISC over FY10 is subject to reduction should actual revenues fall below projections and projections are that there will be approximately 40% less funds next year.

HISC and the Invasive Species Committees on five islands are presently researching potential outside sources of funding to keep staff and projects intact and prevent setbacks on strides already made in prevention, detection and control of invasive species, including public outreach and education. Efforts are underway to reprioritize work plans for next year as these projects have no other source of state support to carry out their critical work.



*Call the Pest Hotline to report invasive pests.*