

LINDA LINGLE
Governor



State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DUANE K. OKAMOTO
Deputy to the Chairperson

TESTIMONY OF SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2008

3:30 P.M.

HOUSE BILL NO. 2501, H.D. 1
RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

Chairperson Oshiro and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill No. 2501, H.D. 1. The purpose of this bill is to establish and fund the department of agriculture's biosecurity program. The department supports this bill; however, we have concerns about the adverse budgetary impact that this bill will have on the Executive Supplemental budget request.

The department of agriculture has formulated and has begun to implement a new biosecurity program for the state consisting of preclearance programs, port-of-entry inspections, post-entry control and eradication programs, and initiatives to spur the growth of agriculture in Hawaii to reduce the state's dependency on imported agricultural products.

Several major projects key to the implementation of the biosecurity program are underway at this time. Specifically, we have initiated the planning and installation of joint-use inspection facilities at the airports and harbors to mitigate environmental concerns for the improvements to the transportation infrastructure at ports statewide; and are currently developing coordinated federal-state programs targeting risk assessments, diagnostics, detection, control and suppression, and emergency management programs.

CIP proposals have been submitted and are under review in the department. Consultants are involved in scoping the project and identifying the needs of state and federal agencies, the airlines, freight carriers and growers in Hawaii.

A separate but related initiative is under way to identify the inspection infrastructure needed at Honolulu Harbor of the inspection of sea containers arriving in Hawaii containing high pest risk cargo.

In addition to the above, the department has committed to expand efforts to control invasive species in Hawaii through biological control, the introduction of beneficial insects and pathogens for the control of pest species. The department has an excellent track record in this area.

Report Title:

Invasive Species; Biosecurity Program; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes statutory provisions on, and appropriates funds for, the department of agriculture's biosecurity program.

(HB2501 HD1)

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO BIOSECURITY.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the unchecked spread of invasive species is the single greatest threat to Hawaii's economy, natural environment, and the health and lifestyle of Hawaii's people. Invasive pests can cause millions of dollars in crop losses, the extinction of native species, the destruction of native forests, the spread of disease, and the quarantine of exported agricultural crops.

Island ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to the destructive power of invasive pests. In Guam, the accidental introduction of the brown tree snake has resulted in widespread devastation. Without natural predators or competition for food, brown tree snake populations have grown exponentially, causing mass extinctions of endemic birds. Where there were once bird

songs, the silent forests of Guam are now home to as many as 15,000 snakes per square mile. Just one new pest like the brown tree snake could forever change the character of the Hawaiian islands.

Despite our ongoing efforts to detect and eradicate invasive species, our fragile island ecosystems are constantly at risk from insects, disease-bearing organisms, snakes, weeds, and other invasive pests. The coqui frog, ~~Salvinia molesta~~, ~~Miconia calvescense~~, ohia rust, nettle caterpillar, and little ~~red-imported~~ fire ant are all present in Hawaii, disrupting the delicate balance of our ecosystems, crowding out native species, and reducing the biodiversity of our islands. Other harmful species like the papaya mealybug, erythrina gall wasp, Asian citrus psyllid, and varroa mite have the potential to devastate our environment and agriculture if allowed to become widespread ~~established~~ in Hawaii and remain ~~spread~~ unchecked by natural predators.

The department of agriculture has created a biosecurity program to fight invasive species on several fronts by:

- (1) Administering pre-entry measures to minimize the risk of invasive pests entering the State;

- (2) Conducting port-of-entry inspections to detect and quarantine or destroy pests upon arrival; and
- (3) Administering post-entry measures to mitigate the establishment of pests in the State.

The department has also supported the growth of Hawaii's agriculture by attempting to reduce the State's dependency on imported agricultural products which may contain pests. The legislature finds that sufficient support for a biosecurity program is vital to the public health and welfare of Hawaii.

The purpose of this Act is to establish and fund the department of agriculture's biosecurity program.

SECTION 2. Chapter 150A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new part to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

"PART . BIOSECURITY PROGRAM

§150A-A Biosecurity program; establishment. The department shall establish a biosecurity program authorized under this chapter [~~, chapter 141, chapter 145, and any other relevant state or federal law to implement the program.~~] that will interface with any other relevant state laws pertaining to agriculture or relevant federal law to implement the program.

§150A-B Objectives of biosecurity program. The objectives of the biosecurity program shall be to:

- (1) Establish a multi-dimensional system to prevent the entry into the Sstate and interisland movement [~~from island to island~~] of pests and [~~other illegal organisms~~] prohibited organisms or restricted organisms without a permit; and
- (2) Respond effectively to eradicate, control, reduce, and suppress incipient pest populations and established pests and [~~other illegal organisms~~] seize and dispose of prohibited organisms or restricted organisms without a permit.

§150A-C General actions to achieve objectives. To achieve the objectives of the biosecurity program, the department shall plan for [7] and, within available legislative appropriations, implement the following:

- (1) Work with government agencies and agricultural commodity exporters of other states and countries to establish pre-entry inspection programs under which cargo bound for the Sstate is inspected at the ports of departure or other points outside the Sstate;

(2) Establish, operate, or participate in operating port-of-entry facilities where multiple government agencies may [~~conduct cargo inspections and detect, quarantine, and dispose of discovered pests and other illegal organisms~~ to:] inspect, quarantine, fumigate, disinfect, destroy, or exclude, as appropriate, articles that may harbor pests or exclude articles are prohibited or restricted without a permit, with the goals of:

(A) [~~Perform~~] Performing inspections in an efficient, effective, and expeditious manner for the government agencies involved and for cargo owners, carriers, and [~~recipients~~] importers;

(B) [~~Provide~~] Providing for the proper and safe storage and handling of cargo, especially agricultural and food commodities, awaiting inspection;

(3) Develop, implement, and coordinate post-entry measures to eradicate, control, reduce, and suppress pests and [~~other illegal organisms~~], as appropriate, eradicate or seize and dispose of

prohibited organisms or restricted organisms
without a permit that have entered the Sstate;

- (4) Collaborate with relevant government agencies, agricultural commodity importers, and other persons to examine and develop joint integrated systems to better implement the biosecurity program;
- (5) Improve cargo inspection capabilities and methods, including enhancement of the content and submission requirements for cargo manifests and agricultural commodity ownership and movement certificates;
- (6) Promote the production of agricultural commodities in the state [~~that may be substituted for imported commodities~~] in order to reduce cargo shipments of imported commodities into the Sstate; and
- (7) Provide public education on the negative effects of pests and [~~other illegal organisms~~] prohibited organisms or restricted organisms without a permit to the environment and economy of the Sstate.

§150A-D Biosecurity program; charges, costs. (a)

The department shall set and impose charges [~~upon persons~~

~~whose cargo is inspected under the program in accordance with section 141-5 and this section}~~ for the inspection, quarantine, and eradication of pests in accordance with this chapter and chapter 141.

(b) The department shall set the charges at amounts intended to generate revenues that, when combined with federal and other funds, are sufficient to pay for the operating and maintenance cost of the program and debt service on bonds issued to fund facilities constructed for the program.

§150A-E Federal and other funds. The department shall place high priority on seeking and applying for federal and other funds [~~that may be used~~] for the biosecurity program.

§150A-F Schedule of appropriations and expenditures for program. (a) By January 1, 2009, the department shall prepare a schedule of proposed annual appropriations for the biosecurity program for the ensuing six fiscal years ~~for the biosecurity program~~ that represents the department's realistic expectation as to the amounts necessary to effectively operate the program, yet remain within the constraints of projected state revenue growth.

(b) By January 1 of each fiscal year thereafter, the department shall update the schedule to include the

following information, as applicable, for the immediate past fiscal year, current fiscal year, and ensuing five fiscal years:

- (1) The proposed appropriations submitted or to be submitted by the department to the governor for the biosecurity program;
- (2) The proposed appropriations submitted or to be submitted by the governor to the legislature in the executive or supplemental budget;
- (3) The actual appropriations by the legislature; and
- (4) The actual expenditures.

(c) The department shall submit each required schedule to the legislature twenty days before the convening of every regular session.

(d) The department may submit with each schedule a narrative commenting on the effects of any variance between the actual expenditure for the biosecurity program during a fiscal year and proposed appropriation submitted by the department to the governor for that fiscal year.

§150A-G Annual report. The department shall submit an annual report to the legislature on the biosecurity program. The schedule required under section 150A-E shall be included in the annual report."

SECTION 3. Section 141-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"§141-2 **Rules.** Subject to chapter 91 the department of agriculture shall adopt, amend, and repeal rules not inconsistent with law, for and concerning:

- (1) The introduction, transportation, and propagation of trees, shrubs, herbs, and other plants;
- (2) The quarantine, inspection, fumigation, disinfection, destruction, or exclusion, either upon introduction into the State, or at any time or place within the State, of any nursery-stock, tree, shrub, herb, vine, cut-flower, cutting, graft, scion, bud, seed, leaf, root, or rhizome; any nut, fruit, or vegetable; any grain, cereal, or legume in the natural or raw state; any moss, hay, straw, dry-grass, or other forage; any unmanufactured log, limb, or timber; or any other plant growth or plant product unprocessed or in the raw state; any sand, soil, or earth; any live bird, reptile, insect, or other animal, in any stage of development, that is in addition to the so-called domestic animals, which are provided for in section 142-2; and any box, barrel, crate, or other containers in which the articles,

substances, or objects have been transported or contained, and any packing material used in connection therewith, which is or may be diseased or infested with insects or likely to assist in the transmission or dissemination of any insect or plant disease injurious, harmful, or detrimental, or likely to become injurious, harmful, or detrimental to the agricultural or horticultural industries or the forests of the State, state, or which is or may be in itself injurious, harmful, or detrimental to the same (included therein may be rules governing the ~~[shipping]~~ transportation of any of the articles, substances, or objects enumerated above in this section between different localities on any one of the islands within the State state);

- (3) The prohibition of importation into the State, state, from any or all foreign countries, or from other parts of the United States, or the shipment from one island within the State state to another island therein, or the transportation from one part or locality of any island to another part or locality of the same island, of any specific article, substance, or object or class of

articles, substances or objects, among those enumerated above in this section, which is diseased or infested with insects or likely to assist in the transmission or dissemination of any insect or plant disease injurious, harmful, or detrimental or likely to be injurious, harmful, or detrimental to the agricultural or horticultural industries, or the forests of the State, ~~state,~~ or which is or may be in itself injurious, harmful, or detrimental to the same;

(4) The preparation by cargo carriers of manifests of cargo shipped transported into the Sstate or between islands and the submission of the manifests to the department; and

[+4)] (5) The manner in which agricultural product promotion and research activities may be undertaken, after coordinating with the agribusiness development corporation.

All rules adopted under this section shall have the force and effect of law."

SECTION 4. Section 141-5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"§141-5 **Charges for inspection, etc.** The department of agriculture shall, with the approval of the governor,

adopt a reasonable scale of charges, which may be changed from time to time, for the inspection, disinfection, fumigation, and quarantine, authorized, required, or permitted by this chapter or chapter 142 [~~or~~], 150[~~-~~], or 150A. Certificates and permits in such chapters provided for concerning articles or animals imported, or proposed to be imported, into the State, state, and the charges so provided for, shall be paid for in advance before any certificate or permit is delivered, or any of such articles or animals are permitted to be landed. If thereafter further expense is incurred in the inspection, treatment, or quarantine of any of such articles or animals, the charges therefor shall be paid before any of such articles or animals shall be delivered."

SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2008-2009 for the biosecurity program of the department of agriculture.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of agriculture for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 6. In codifying the new sections added by section 2 of this Act, the revisor of statutes shall

substitute appropriate section numbers for the letters used in designating the new sections in this Act.

SECTION 7. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 8. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2008.

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

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CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

**TESTIMONY OF THE CHAIRPERSON
OF THE BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

on House Bill 2501, House Draft 1 – RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE**

February 20, 2008

House Bill 2501, House Draft 1 consolidates existing quarantine authorities and stated goals for the Department of Agriculture (DOA) by recognizing the biosecurity program, provides authorities to require cargo manifests of cargo and provides funding. The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports the intent of this measure, but has concerns as it would adversely impact priorities in the Executive Supplemental Budget request

Preventing new invasive species from establishing in Hawaii provides the greatest long term protection for Hawaii and the Department supports stronger import quarantine measures. Fortunately, the Hawaii's islands provide a natural barrier and advantage that helps slow the interisland movement of invasive species. The increase in interisland transportation without adequate inspection and quarantine has resulted in the spread of invasive species across the state once they become established on a single island. Some of the most recent and costly examples of this are the introduction of several coqui frogs each year to the islands of Maui, Molokai, Oahu and Kauai and the spread of stinging nettle caterpillar from the Big Island to Maui and Oahu.

In Hawaii, over 432,000 - 20' equivalent containers are imported annually according to 2005 numbers recorded by the Department of Transportation. A similar number of containers are transported interisland each year. Allowing DOA to review detailed descriptions of the contents of the containers and prioritize them for inspection will allow the highest risk goods to be inspected for invasive species as the current DOA capacity allows while allowing the rest to move on to their destinations. Requiring detailed manifests will improve the State's response to future risk posed by new commodities such as the increased importation of building materials that may harbor invasive plants, insects or even larger animals such as snakes. Including inspection and quarantine treatment in the State's transportation network and providing DOA with the resources and authority to improve interisland and import quarantine for Hawaii, protects the State's agricultural sector, tourism economy and environment.

DOA has developed and implemented key initiatives in their Biosecurity Strategy designed to reduce the import and spread of invasive species such as coqui and nettle caterpillar. The recent increase in permanent inspector positions and the establishment of the user fee under Act 9,

Session Laws of Hawaii 2007, has been an important incremental step in the process of supporting a modernized and functional quarantine system to protect Hawaii from invasive species that threaten agriculture, the economy, our environment and way of life.

The development of sustained, scalable funding for Hawaii's quarantine system was one of the priorities recognized by the 2002 Legislative Reference Bureau Report "Filling the Gaps in the Fight Against Invasive Species". In a poll carried out in Feb 2007 by Qmark, a division of Star Segal, done on behalf of the Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS), nearly 75% of those polled supported a service fee to protect Hawaii from invasive species.

Establishment of adequate interisland quarantine inspections and improvements in inspections of imports will require additional resources and authorities as identified in this measure. The Department supports the intent of this measure, however has concerns with the budgetary implications this bill will have on the Executive Supplemental Budget request, and defers to DOA on the specific mechanisms for developing these tools.

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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BRENNON T. MORIOKA
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IN REPLY REFER TO:

February 20, 2008

TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

HOUSE BILL NO. 2501, H.D.1

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Department of Transportation supports the intent of this bill but is concerned with the impact that this bill would have on the Executive Supplemental Budget.

House Bill No. 2501, H.D.1, would add a new part to Chapter 150A, HRS, to establish a biosecurity program and require cargo carriers to prepare and submit manifests of cargo shipped into the State or between islands, to the Department of Agriculture.

We believe the establishment of a biosecurity program will provide the State with an important tool to control the spread of invasive species. As an operator of airport and harbor facilities in the State, the Department stands ready to work with the Department of Agriculture in its implementation of actions to achieve the objectives of this bill.

House of Representatives
Twenty-Fourth Legislature
Regular Session of 2008

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Hearing
Wednesday, February 20, 2008
3:30 p.m.

Testimony by: Ralph C. Boyea, Legislative Advocate, Hawai'i County Council

Testimony in favor of HB 2501, HD1 and HB 2516 RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

Chairperson Oshiro and Honored Representatives,

On behalf of the Hawai'i County Council, I ask that you to pass House Bill 2501, HD1 and House Bill 2516. These Bills establish necessary statutory provisions, authorize the issue of general obligation bonds and appropriate funds for the Department of Agriculture biosecurity program. This program and the accompanying inspection facilities are necessary if we are going to have any hope in controlling invasive species, both plant and animal, in Hawai'i.

The Hawai'i County Council is very supportive of any efforts by the State Legislature to control invasive species. In recent years Hawai'i County has been subjected to invasion by coqui frogs, fire ants and apple snails, to name just a few invasive species. All of these species have created significant impact financially, emotionally and culturally. We are also very concerned about a possible future invasion of honey bee mites which could be devastating to our bee farmers and our agricultural industry. Hawaii County has also been invaded by numerous plant species that have literally taken over areas of our land and adversely affected our crops.

We are well aware that the Department of Agriculture needs additional financial support to increase it's efforts in maintaining our biosecurity. We applaud the State Legislature for looking for creative ways to combat these problems.

We urge you to pass HB 2501, HD1 and HB 2516.



Maui County Farm Bureau

*An Affiliate of the American Farm Bureau Federation and Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation
Serving Maui's Farmers and Ranchers*

TESTIMONY

HB 2501 HD1 RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Chair Oshiro and Committee Members:

My name is Warren Watanabe, Executive Director of the Maui County Farm Bureau, a non-profit general agriculture organization and an affiliate of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation.

HFBF **strongly requests your SUPPORT of HB 2501HD1** to support implementation of the Hawaii Department of Agriculture's Biosecurity Program. Programs such as pre-entry measures which include agreements with other States and countries take time to develop. Funding to begin the process immediately is critical so mechanisms can be in place in the foreseeable future to stop invasives from leaving their places of origin and to stop them if they accidentally escape local inspection procedures.

The viability of our farmers and ranchers is at stake. Invasive species control is of great concern to our farmers and ranchers. Crops have been lost, control costs increased and health of our livestock industry threatened by various invasive species. Therefore, this subject matter is one of our primary concerns. We are therefore in agreement that Invasive Species Control is important.

As we look to address invasive species, our farmers and ranchers are facing a near crisis situation in the area of transportation. Improvements in Harbor infrastructure will be critical for expansion of Hawaii's agriculture. Recent experiences with the Hawaii Superferry and now the Kahului Harbor 2030 Draft EIS gives strong testament to the delay tactics that will be used by some to slow down the improvement process. This measure is needed to ensure that concern of invasive species does not used to slow down the much needed harbor improvement plans.

MCFB respectfully requests timely passage of this measure. The viability of our farmers and ranchers is at stake.

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**Hawaii
Crop
Improvement
Association**

Sarah Styan, President
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Testimony by: Sarah Styan
HB 2501hd1, Biosecurity
House FIN Committee
Wednesday, Feb. 20, 2008 – Agenda #3
Room 308: 3:30 pm

Position: Support

Chair Oshiro and Members of the House FIN Committee:

My name is Sarah Styan. I am a Kauai resident, President of HCIA and research scientist of Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Waimea Research Station. The HCIA represents seed production and research facilities operating in Hawaii for nearly 40 years. The HCIA is comprised of five member companies that farm an estimated 8,000 acres on four islands, valued at \$97.6 million in operating budget (2006/2007 HASS). We are proud members of Hawaii's diversified agriculture and life sciences industries.

As testified in previous years, HCIA believes that financing the prevention of importation of invasive species is more prudent than later financing of eradication or containment programs. Examples of such latter efforts include the battle against the coqui frogs, miconia, gorse weed, fireweed and others.

Policy and funding support for the Department of Agriculture's proposed Biosecurity program is critical, not only to the agricultural industry, but to Hawaii's environment. The proposed program seeks to establish pre-entry inspection programs and quarantine as needed of exporters from other states and countries, and safe handling and storage of food and agricultural cargo. This is a welcomed and necessary program to protect Hawaii's farmers and environment. Hawaii's exporters have been subject to such stringent pre-entry inspection programs for many years.

Please support this measure. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.



Conservation Council for Hawai'i

Testimony Submitted to the House Committee on Finance

Hearing: Wednesday, February 20, 2008

3:30 pm

Room 308

Support for HB 2501 HD 1 Relating to Biosecurity

Aloha. The Conservation Council for Hawai'i supports HB 2501 HD 1, which establishes statutory provisions and appropriates funds for the Department of Agriculture's biosecurity program.

We also recommend that, as part of the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture's post-entry measures within the biosecurity program, permanent adequate funding be established for the Invasive Species Committee's for Kaua'i, O'ahu, Moloka'i, Maui, and Hawai'i. The Invasive Species Committees are doing a good job with limited resources. They are working with private landowners in a cooperative manner to control invasive species already here. Please identify the appropriate vehicle to establish permanent adequate funding for the Invasive Species Committees.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Ziegler



Working Today for the Nature of Tomorrow!

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Hawai'i Affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation

President: Julie Lalaloa • Vice-President: Nelson Ho • Secretary/Treasurer: Kim Ramos • Directors: Fred Kraus, Ph.D. • Douglas Lamerson, George Robertson • Claire Shimbukuro • Helene Takemoto • Meshuri Waite • Executive Director: Marjorie Ziegler



Sierra Club Hawai'i Chapter

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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

February 20th, 2008, 3:30 P.M.

(Testimony is 4 pages long)

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2501 HD1 AND HB 2516

Chair Oshiro and members of the Committee:

The Sierra Club, Hawai'i Chapter, with 5500 dues paying members statewide, supports both HB 2501 HD1 and HB 2516, providing funding for invasives inspection facilities and for the Department of Agriculture's biosecurity program.

We believe that the adequate funding for the control and prevention of invasive species has been lacking for too long. As a result, Hawaii's residents, businesses, and agricultural operations are footing the bill. Estimates by one state biologist show that alien pests cost residents and the agriculture industry upwards of \$400 million annually.

Hawai'i is losing the war on alien species. Some alien species, such as miconia, threaten to destroy watersheds and native ecosystems, jeopardizing freshwater supplies and pushing species to extinction. Other alien species, such as the coqui frog and dengue and its carriers, threaten our health, tourist industry, and our quality of life. Of particular concern is the introduction of the brown tree snake—a snake that nearly wiped out the native bird population on Guam.

Invasive pests from the Asia and the US mainland wreck havoc on native ecosystems. The cost—both economic and environmental—of introduced species in Hawai'i is astronomical. Tourism, agriculture, native species, and citizens' way of life are threatened with each new introduction. Sufficient funding to reduce introductions is clearly warranted; this is one area where an ounce of prevention is worth many pounds of cure.

The following pages contain articles highlighting the magnitude of Hawaii's invasive species problem. The first, from the February 7th, 2001 *Honolulu Advertiser*, describes the failure of the current mitigation methods efforts at the Kahului airport. The second, from the December 15th, 2005 *Honolulu Advertiser*, explains the dire situation with a recently introduced pest, the erythrina gall wasp, and the native wiliwili tree. Both make the case for expanded invasive species funding.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Airport inspectors find plenty of trouble

By Timothy Hurley

Advertiser Maui Bureau

February 7, 2001

KAHULUI, Maui — A trial period of beefed-up agricultural inspections under way at Kahului Airport has turned up hundreds of insects and diseases, many not known to occur in Hawai'i.

State agriculture officials said yesterday that inspectors have returned contaminated shipments to the Mainland and have destroyed others as part of an effort to see exactly what's needed to intercept alien species at an airport that is soon expected to be accepting international flights.

At the same time, they said, the project may shed some light on weaknesses that may exist at inspection points at other ports of entry across the state.

Agriculture officials described their pest risk assessment study last night at a meeting sponsored by the Maui Invasive Species Committee and the Maui Farm Bureau.

The effort, they said, is being financed by \$300,000 in Federal Aviation Administration money and features more inspectors and dog teams, a doubling of the staff at Kahului Airport. The project was launched in late September and will continue during intermittent three- and four-week periods for a year.

Lyle Wong, Plant Industry Division administrator, said workers are conducting a 100 percent inspection of all incoming domestic flights and air cargo containers of agricultural products such as fresh fruits and vegetables and also are looking at aircraft cabin cargo and wheel wells.

Specifically, inspectors are looking for plant materials, insects, animals and other organisms that could wreak havoc on Maui's environment and crops.

Entomologist Neil Reimer said that Kahului Airport inspectors intercepted 90 plant diseases and 844 insects, mites, snails and other pests from Sept. 25 to Dec. 15. That compares to typical results of 1,200 interceptions a year islandwide.

Of the 844 pests, nearly 200 of them are not known to occur in Hawai'i, Reimer said, and about 200 more were too immature to be identified. The rest already are established in the Islands.

Lloyd Loope, U.S. Geological Survey scientist stationed at Haleakala National Park, said the numbers indicate the inspection system is "a leaky sieve."

"We're finding out just how leaky it is," Loope said.

The best solution for Hawai'i seems to be to push for pre-inspections before goods leave the Mainland, he said.

"Otherwise, Hawai'i will continue to accumulate a host of pests that impact all aspects of life and business in Hawai'i," Loope said.

When state officials announced plans to expand Kahului Airport 10 years ago, some critics questioned the wisdom of accommodating international flights and even more Mainland flights without a more serious quarantine effort to prevent invasive alien pests.

The critics complained that the existing inspection system was inadequate and getting less effective over time because of budget cuts.

More than two years ago, state and federal authorities signed an agreement on preventing introduction of alien species at Kahului Airport. A team of representatives from state and federal agencies, the airline industry and the Maui tourism industry was formed to look at the issue, and an Alien Species Action Plan was formulated.

Reimer said preliminary data show plants present a higher risk of bringing in pests, while passengers and baggage are a lower risk.

Fred Kraus, the state's alien species coordinator, said increased port-of-entry inspections statewide would help filter out many pests, including an increasing number of snakes.

Scientists have said more than 15 new pest species become established in Hawai'i each year.

Honolulu Advertiser

Thursday, December 15, 2005

Scientists step up battle to save wiliwili

By Jan TenBruggencate

Hawai'i researchers and plant experts are working in laboratories, gardens, native forests and soon even in Africa toward a common goal of saving the embattled Hawaiian wiliwili tree, which is being threatened across the state by a mysterious bug called the erythrina gall wasp.

The almost microscopic wasps appeared in Hawai'i only this year and have invaded all the main islands. They are soon expected to be everywhere wiliwili is found in the wild landscape.

"They're so tiny and they're spread on winds, so it just seems they're going to reach every population," said Honolulu botanist Maya LeGrande, who specializes in wiliwili. She said wiliwili is the only native dryland tree species that is still widespread.

The urban landscape is suffering, too. Native wiliwili and its relatives, sometimes known as coral trees, are popular landscaping plants that belong to the genus erythrina. Many of trees in parks and along streets in Honolulu and across the state are now bare, their branch tips overtaken by misshapen lumps, or galls, that are unformed leaves, swollen in reaction to eggs injected by the female wasps.

Scientists, foresters, landscapers and natural-resources managers launched a statewide multi-agency response soon after the bug was first noticed on O'ahu in April. But the wasp has spread so rapidly and its impacts are so severe that saving the wiliwili in the Hawaiian dry forest is in doubt.

Some botanists say a biological control — a disease or another insect that attacks the wasp — is the wiliwili's best hope, but state entomologists say it could be years before such a remedy could be approved for release, even if one is found soon.

The next best hope is that something already in the Hawaiian environment will identify the wasp as prey and begin attacking it.

But scientists wonder if there's time, and they are leading a complex series of efforts to bring living plant material into storage, to protect plants still in the wild and to find the magic biological bullet as soon as possible.

Alvin Yoshinaga, who runs the Center for Conservation Research and Training at the University of Hawai'i's Lyon Arboretum, is taking delivery of tens of thousands of seeds from hundreds of populations of wiliwili around the state as part of an effort to preserve the genetic diversity of the wild plants.

"We're refrigerating or freezing them. We're splitting the collections into three different locations," said Lauren Weisenberger, who oversees the arboretum's seed conservation lab. Wiliwili seeds germinate at a high rate and should survive for several years in cold storage, she said.

Scientists at the National Tropical Botanical Garden's new tissue culture laboratory in Lawa'i Valley on Kaua'i are trying a different tack. They are growing rare relatives of wiliwili in a sterile lab, then clipping off bits of leaf and placing them on agar in test tubes and petri dishes. If they can develop

techniques to grow erythrina from sterile plant tissue in the lab, they can keep species alive indefinitely in bug-proof rooms.

"If we can do this, we can keep it safe until the gall wasp is controlled in the wild," said Ellen Coulombe, administrative assistant in the garden's conservation department.

The National Tropical Botanical Garden and the Waimea Valley Audubon Center on O'ahu together have the world's largest collection of wiliwili and other erythrina. Each garden has more than 80 species, and both are working hard to protect their collections.

Waimea botanist David Orr said his gardeners drenched their plants with an insecticide called imidacloprid, which enters the plant's tissues and may protect it against the wasps.

"I'm really amazed at our results. Our plants are doing pretty well," he said.

State foresters with the Department of Land and Natural Resources are experimentally treating wild trees at Kekaha, Kaua'i, and Wai'anae, O'ahu, with applications of imidacloprid. Similar treatments at the National Tropical Botanical Garden, however, have not been that successful.

It is clear that some wiliwili cousins, notably some thick-leaved species from Africa, appear to be naturally resistant.

On Dec. 24, state Department of Agriculture entomologist Mohsen Ramadan will fly to Tanzania in Africa, where there are known to be relatives of the erythrina gall wasp. His goal is to find other insects that naturally attack the gall wasp and might be effective in controlling the pest in Hawai'i. Other insect experts are looking in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa.

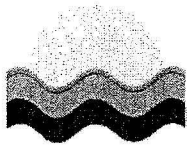
"The rainy season will be starting there and plants will be beginning to flush. That will be a good time to be looking for the wasps," said Neil Reimer, plant pest control branch manager at the Department of Agriculture.

"I am confident that there are parasites in Africa and that we can get them."

But that's just the first step. Reimer said it could take several years to completely test any parasites to be sure they don't threaten native Hawaiian insects.

University of Hawai'i entomologist Russell Messing said scientists still don't clearly understand the interaction between the gall wasp and the wiliwili plant.

"The thing that's tricky about the project is you can have entire communities of things living within a gall. There's a lot of biology that needs to be done," Messing said.



Hawaii Island Economic Development Board
ISLAND OF OPPORTUNITY

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Hawai'i State Legislature
State Capitol, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

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Reference: HB 2259 HD1 – Relating to Aerospace Development
Hearing: Conference Room 308 at 2:00 p.m., Thursday, February 21, 2008.

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Barry Mizuno
Owner's Representative
Puna Geothermal Venture

Dear Representative Oshiro, Representative Lee and Committee Members:

Immediate Past Chair
Warren Lee
President
Hawaii Electric Light Company

On behalf of the directors and the 115 member organizations of the Hawaii Island Economic Development Board, we wholeheartedly support HB 2259 HD1 to enable the office of aerospace development, department of business, economic development and tourism to conduct feasibility studies for a spaceport here in Hawai'i and to make application to the Federal Aviation Administration for a commercial space transportation license.

Director
Winston Chow
Senior Vice President
First Hawaiian Bank

Space tourism as the new frontier of commercialization, potentially can generate a good source of income for the State of Hawai'i without adversely effecting our precious environment and provide for a new set of high paying, higher skill jobs here in Hawai'i.

Director
Roberta Chu
Senior Vice President
Bank of Hawaii

On behalf of the directors, we ask that you pass this legislation and appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony before you.

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HAWAII FARM BUREAU FEDERATION
2343 ROSE STREET
HONOLULU, HI 96819

FEBRUARY 20, 2008

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Agenda #3

TESTIMONY ON HB 2501, HD 1
RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

Chair Oshiro and Members of the Committee:

My name is Alan Takemoto, Executive Director, of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, which is the largest non-profit general agriculture organization representing approximately 1,600 farm and ranch family members statewide.

The Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation supports HB 2501, HD 1, which establishes statutory provisions and appropriates funds for the DOA's biosecurity program.

Invasive species have become one of the most devastating problems impacting Hawaii's agricultural industry. Invasive species have negatively impacted both Hawaii's environment and economy. The demise of the native wili wili tress, the recent infestation of imported Christmas trees, coqui frog, and others pests and diseases chronically devastate our agricultural crops. DOA's biosecurity program is a comprehensive plan to address our food security and invasive species control in Hawaii.

Thank you for allowing us to testify on this measure.

Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
Supporting H.B. 2501 HD 1 Relating to Biosecurity
House Committee on Finance
Wednesday, February 20, 2008, 3:30PM, Rm. 308

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i is a private non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of Hawaii's native plants, animals, and ecosystems. The Conservancy has helped to protect nearly 200,000 acres of natural lands for native species in Hawai'i. Today, we actively manage more than 32,000 acres in 11 nature preserves on O'ahu, Maui, Hawai'i, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, and Kaua'i. We also work closely with government agencies, private parties and communities on cooperative land and marine management projects.

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i supports H.B. 2501 HD 1 Relating to Biosecurity.

The Hawai'i Department of Agriculture is doing an admirable job to protect the State from new pest species. With additional financial and personnel support from the Legislature, the Department's implementation of a multi-faceted Biosecurity Plan will enhance this effort with more inspectors, more efficient and effective inspection services, joint state-federal inspection facilities, and agreements with importers for improved sanitary protocols before items are shipped to Hawai'i.

This bill takes the important step of codifying the Biosecurity Plan in statute, and providing the Department of Agriculture with the necessary authority to fund their important efforts.

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The House of Representatives
Committee on Finance
Wednesday, February 20, 2008
3:30 a.m., Conference Room 308
State Capitol

Testimony in Support of HB 2501 HD1

Aloha Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee,
The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) **supports HB 2501 HD1**, *Relating to Biosecurity*.

Two reports* published in the early 1990s listed the need for a biosecurity program to protect Hawai'i from invasive species.

One of the reports by the U.S. Congress—Office of Technology Assessment states, *"Hawaii's geographic isolation makes it the state most in need of a comprehensive policy to address NIS (non-indigenous species, now referred to as invasive species)—virtually a separate "national" policy with its own programs and resources..."*

HB 2501 HD1 would give the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) the ability to carry out a biosecurity program which would go a long way in addressing some of the State's most pressing invasive species issues. HDOA's biosecurity program, along with a joint inspection facility (HB 2516, and other measures) would bolster our ability to prevent or intercept new invasive species that could enter the State and cause irreparable harm.

CGAPS asks for your support of HB 2501 HD1. Mahalo.

CGAPS--Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species
Ph: (808) 722-0995

- *1. *"The Alien Pest Species Invasion in Hawaii: Background Study and Recommendations for Interagency Planning"* (The Nature Conservancy of Hawaii and Natural Resources Defense Council July 1992)
2. *"Harmful Non-Indigenous Species in the United States"* (U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment 1993)