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**TESTIMONY OF SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
AND  
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

February 6, 2008  
8:30 A.M.

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2785**

**MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO CONTROL OR ERADICATE THE NETTLE  
CATERPILLAR (DARNA PALLIVITTA MOTH) ON THE ISLAND OF MAUI.**

Chairpersons Tsuji and Morita and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 2785. The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds to control or exterminate the nettle caterpillar on Maui. The department supports the intent of this bill provided that it does not adversely impact the priorities of the Executive Biennium budget.

Nettle caterpillar is currently present on the Big Island, Maui, and Oahu. The department has control programs on each of these islands and works closely with the islands' invasive species councils. However, the control strategies differ on each island due to differences in infestations. The moth is not present on Molokai or Kauai. The department has early detection programs on these two islands in order to discover the moth and eradicate it before it becomes established.

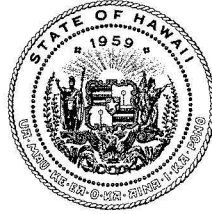
Nettle caterpillar is widespread throughout East Hawaii and Waimea on the Big Island. The strategy for these infestations is insecticide control by the property owner

when infestations are found. The department has worked with the property owners by educating them on the selection of effective insecticides.

The department is in the process in determining the extent of the infestations on Oahu and Maui. Our surveys have detected two infestations on each island. We were able to eradicate the infestation at Waianae on Oahu. The other infestations are not as localized and the department is currently working with USDA in the development of pheromone control techniques. These would include mass trapping of males and the disruption of mating with the use of pheromones. The objective would be to contain the nettle caterpillar populations until a biocontrol agent can be released.

The department's long-term solution for this pest is biological control. We currently have an effective natural enemy in our Insect Containment Facility that is awaiting state and federal approval for release. This natural enemy has been very effective against nettle caterpillar in Taiwan. Once approved, the natural enemy will be released in nettle caterpillar infested areas throughout the state. We hope to gain the necessary permits by late spring or summer.

LINDA LINGLE  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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

**on House Bill 2785 – RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL INSPECTIONS**

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON  
AGRICULTURE  
and  
ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**February 6, 2008**

House Bill 2785 appropriates funds to control or eradicate the nettle caterpillar (*Darna pallivitta* moth) on the Island of Maui. The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports the intent of this measure to combat invasive species, but prefers a more coordinated approach, and has concerns with the budgetary implications this bill will have on the Executive Supplemental Budget request.

There is a large population of nettle caterpillar on the Big Island and over the past year new populations have been discovered on both Oahu and Maui. These populations were established from plants imported from the Big Island and there remains a threat that this pest will also spread to other islands. The effort to respond to the new populations required redirection of Department of Agriculture and the Invasive Species Committees staff away from other priority pests on both Maui and Oahu and with Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) support with outreach and research and control, a rapid response was put into place on Maui and Oahu.

In responding to cases such as this, the Department supports a statewide perspective and a coordinated program such as HISC that brings together resources for prevention, response and control, research and outreach that are all needed for a successful statewide control effort. In this case, the Hawaii Department of Agriculture is seeking permission to release a biological control agent to suppress populations of the nettle caterpillar on the Big Island. The agencies will need to track the success of ongoing control efforts on known populations using the detection methods developed for field use under a HISC research funds. These efforts will need to be teamed with improved interisland quarantine authority and treatment options for plants to reduce the likelihood that this pest will move between islands.

Staff statewide have worked to provide outreach to help the public get involved in detecting new populations. This coordinated, partnership effort was possible because of the coordinated approach offered by the Council. The Department appreciates support for invasive species control initiatives but suggests that a coordinated approach such as that of the HISC be used.