

**To: Representative Hermina Morita, Chair
Representative Mele Carroll, Vice-Chair & Members of the
Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection**

From: Michael Blietz
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LATE
Testimony

Re. Hearing on HB 2785--Relating to the Nettle Caterpillar

February 6, 2008 at 8:30am.

Conference Room 325, State Capitol

Testimony in Support

Dear Chair Morita, Vice-Chair Carroll and members:

Thank you for hearing my testimony in support of HB2785—Relating to the Nettle Caterpillars. I am a farmer in Haiku, Maui, and have experienced this new invasive species first hand. It has done damage to my crop of palms as well as landscaping plants. There was an extremely heavy infestation across the street from my farm. I have spent many hours spraying this area of four acres planted in tropicals trying to keep the caterpillar in check. The owner is not able to spray, as he is too old to handle the equipment so he drives the truck I spray for him. The Maui Invasive Species people have let us use the State spraying equipment when it is not being used. It is the use of this equipment a 100 gallon portable sprayer that has really helped us try and keep them in check. We have just found them again and will need to re-spray again in the coming weeks. We have seen as many as 40 caterpillars on one coconut tree.

There is a school down wind of us about three quarters of a mile and as one of the caterpillars favorite food is a common type of grass found in playgrounds and alongside the highways. The ramifications are enormous for the children who play in the school yards. The eradication methods include bug zappers for the adult moths, pheromone traps for the female moths and for the caterpillars we use a all natural spray that is virtually harmless to humans, but these things all cost money. The recent heavy infestation was largely battled with our own money, and it cost us dearly to fight yet another pest, please help us.

Sincerely,
Michael Blietz