

LINDA LINGLE  
Governor



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Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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TESTIMONY OF SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2008  
11:30 A.M.

HOUSE BILL 2977, H.D. 1  
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Chairperson Oshiro and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 2977, H.D. 1. The purpose of this bill is to amend chapter 194-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes to include a provision that the Hawaii Invasive Species Council shall amend their plan and give priority to eradicating coqui frogs on state and county lands within one mile of residential areas. The department offers comments.

It is clear that the coqui frog, especially the populations on the island of Hawaii, has not been mitigated to a level acceptable to the community. Community action groups that are trying to control the frog within their neighborhoods view the infested state and county lands as a reservoir for re-infestations.

The Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC), a partnership of federal, state, county, and private, provides the institutional framework for leadership and coordination to develop and implement a comprehensive state-wide invasive species program.

An effective program is one that has sufficient programmatic capability to prevent new invasive species from entering into the State, control those pests already here at a

level that reduces the risks, and mitigates the hazards at a level acceptable to the people of Hawaii.

An effective program is also one that maintains an objective perspective and sets and follows established priorities and strategies. In this regard, coqui frogs on state or county lands within one mile of residential areas may not pose the highest risk of establishment or proliferation.

It is important that we work closely with our community partners in addressing this and other invasive pests so that they have a clear understanding of the reason for and implementation of the coqui statewide plan. Coordinated efforts and support are needed to make headway in this battle.

LINDA LINGLE  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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

on House Bill 2977 House Draft 1 – RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
FINANCE

February 21, 2008

House Bill 2977 House Draft 1 directs the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (Council) to give priority to eradicating coqui frogs that are on state or county land and within one mile of residential areas. The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) recognizes the problems that uncontrolled coqui frog populations have on residential communities and supports the intent of this bill to provide relief for these problems and has worked with partners, counties, federal agencies and the Legislature to find the best solutions to those problems.

In July 18, 2006, the Hawaii Invasive Species Council was presented with a statewide plan, "**Hawaii's Coqui Frog Management, Research, and Education Plan**", for the control of coqui frogs prepared by the Department. The Department updates the plan as new information, technology and resources are available and to address new populations and problems that occur.

Unfortunately, there are populations of coqui frogs on all of the main Hawaiian Islands. Coqui are found in only three sites on Oahu and only one site on Kauai and the prospects to eradicate them island wide with current resources are promising. Maui has 14 known coqui populations and by the end of 2007, four were considered completely controlled. Of the ten remaining populations currently being controlled, only Maliko Gulch presents significant challenges for the ultimate success of the island wide eradication effort. Maliko Gulch requires additional resources for containment over the short term and eradication over the mid-term. This priority site on Maui encompasses private and state lands and extends into a remote uninhabited gully with some residences near by. Key control sites that will determine whether or not this population can be eradicated are more than one mile from residents. The populations of coqui on the Island of Hawaii are estimated to cover over 24,000 acres. With current control methods, the estimated cost to treat frogs per acre is \$1,500 - \$2,100 per acre and requires multiple treatments. The cost to control the total infested acreage using current methods would be a minimum of \$36,000,000. Current control tools would not be capable of treating the entire infested area before reinfestation could occur.

The Department was provided \$800,000 for coqui frog control efforts for the first year of the biennium only - \$500,000 for Hawaii, \$200,000 for Maui and \$100,000 for Kauai. On Hawaii

Island, \$233,000 of the \$500,000 allocated by the legislature was provided to the United States Department of Agriculture, Fish and Wildlife Services control team and loan sprayer program that focus on controlling coqui in residential areas. The remaining \$267,000 supports the Coqui Coordinator, control technicians and data specialist who work with the Hawaii County Coqui Frog Working Group to track control efforts in direct support of county efforts to contain the spread of coqui and support affected communities.

Focusing on eradicating coqui frogs that are on state or county land within one mile of residential areas may not be the best approach for all islands, most effective measure to prevent introduction or removal of new infestations into new areas, or slow the spread of coqui into ecologically sensitive areas. Priorities as determined by the Coqui Statewide Plan include stopping the spread by targeting sites that pose a high risk of increasing the spread of coqui to new areas such as refuse transfer stations, and new populations that are isolated from existing populations that threaten to significantly increase the current distribution of coqui. In many cases these priority sites are more than one mile from residential areas.

The Department is happy to work with the county Coqui Frog Working Groups, Invasive Species Committees, Department of Agriculture, county agencies, University of Hawaii, federal partners and communities to update and implement statewide plans.



Legislative Testimony  
**HB 2977, HD 1, RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**  
House Committee on Finance

February 21, 2008  
Room: 308

11:30 a.m.

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The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB 2977, HD 1, which seeks to amend Section 194-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes to require the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (Council), in its Coqui Frog Eradication Plan, to give priority to eradicating coqui frogs on state or county lands within a one mile radius of residential areas.

OHA appreciates the thoughtful amendment to this bill and now supports this proposed legislation, which is much more focused and balanced.

As we wrote in our previous testimony, our state is under attack. More than 8,000 plant species have been introduced into gardens and other areas of Hawai'i. Over half of Hawai'i's current flora of flowering plants are non-native, and almost ten percent of these represent a serious threat to our native ecosystems. Numerous invasive marine species threaten our reefs and marine biological assets, while uncounted numbers of invasive species threaten our forests and streams. These species are not high profile or even annoying for residents and visitors; however, the threats that they present for us all are very troubling and real. The sheer number of invasive species coupled with our resource based economy results in what the legislature called in 2003, "the single greatest threat to Hawai'i's economy and natural environment and to the health and lifestyle of Hawai'i's people."

Hawai'i's 2007 Coqui Frog Management, Research, and Education Plan reports that in 2006 alone, the legislature allocated more than \$1.8 million for the control of coqui frogs and that "Multi-agency efforts since 2000 have reduced the populations of Kauai and Oahu and eradication is feasible with current tools and resources."

While it would have been irresponsible to focus all of the State's alien species resources on one species, this amended bill's proposal for the Council to focus its Coqui Frog Eradication Plan on regions that will provide the most immediate, beneficial impact on our citizens is responsible and pragmatic legislation.

Therefore, OHA urges the Committees to PASS HB 2977, HD 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

House of Representatives  
Twenty-Fourth Legislature  
Regular Session of 2008

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Hearing  
Thursday, February 21, 2008  
11:30 a.m.

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

**Testimony in favor of HB 2977, HD1 RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

Chairpersons Oshiro and Honored Representatives,

On behalf of the Hawai'i County Council, I ask that you to pass House Bill 2977, HD1. House Bill 2977, HD1 requires the invasive species council to give priority to eradicating coqui frogs that are on state or county land and within 1 mile of residential areas.

The Hawai'i County Council is very supportive of any efforts by the State Legislature to control invasive species. Coqui frogs have had a significant impact on the quality of life for Hawai'i County residents. Any efforts that the State can make to mitigate and control the coqui frogs will be appreciated.

We urge you to pass HB2977, HD1.

Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i  
Regarding H.B. 2977 HD 1 Relating to Invasive Species  
House Committee on Finance  
Thursday, February 21, 2008, 11:30AM, Room 308

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*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 rare and endangered 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 and also work closely with government agencies and private landowners on cooperative land and marine management projects.*

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The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i submits the following comments regarding H.B. 2977 HD 1 Relating to Invasive Species.

We appreciate the crisis situation that exists with respect to coqui frog invasions, particularly on Hawai'i island and other locations in the State, and we support a strong and coordinated response to address these invasions.

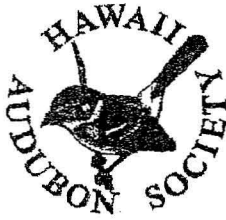
However, we hope that the necessary response to coqui will not prevent the State and its partners from also devoting appropriate attention to other pests that have become established in Hawai'i or worse pests that could come here. The task of the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) is to provide a comprehensive, statewide approach to invasive species including prevention, early detection, control, research and education programs. This effort necessarily results in prioritization based on a variety of issues including human health, safety and well-being, economic harm, and the threat to the health and function of the environment.

**We are concerned that placing a statutory priority on one pest over any other may have some unintended consequences.** For example, the HISC might have to prioritize coqui frog control over response to an introduction of an arguably much worse pest like red imported fire ants, or a mosquito-borne disease. We are also concerned about unintended financial impacts. In Fiscal Year 2007, the Legislature's provision of additional funding for coqui control was really a shifting of existing funds from other invasive species programs, which then caused layoffs in the Island Invasive Species Committees and a hiatus in the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council's research grant program.

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TO: House Committee on Finance

**Committee on Finance, Rep. Marcus Oshiro, Chair & Rep. Marilyn Lee, Vice Chair**  
**Thursday, February 21, 2008, 11:30 A.M., Conference Rm. 308**  
**Re: HB2977, HD1**

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT**

Chair Oshiro and Vice Chair Lee and members of the Committee on Finance. Thank you for the opportunity to submit our testimony **in support of HB2977 HD1, Relating to Invasive Species.**

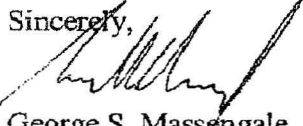
My name is George Massengale and I am with the Hawaii Audubon Society. The Society was founded in 1939, and is Hawaii's oldest conservation organization with over 1,500 members statewide dedicated the Society's primary mission of protecting of Hawaii's birds and habitats.

The Coqui Frog is non-native to Hawaii and was introduced on the Island of Hawaii in the early 1990's from Puerto Rico. Our concern is twofold: First they have a voracious appetite for insects and spiders thus are cutting into the food supply of our native birds including those that are endangered, such as the Honeycreeper. Second, if left to thrive, they could provide a ready food supply for non-native snakes, such as Guam's Brown Tree Snake.

We testified on this measure earlier and support the Committee on Agriculture's amendment to the HB2977, that clarifies the coqui frog eradication plan, giving priority to eradicating coqui frogs that are on state or county land and within one mile of residential areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify here today.

Sincerely,



George S. Massengale, JD  
Legislative Analyst

## FINtestimony

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**From:** shanti108@hawaii.rr.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 20, 2008 1:13 PM  
**To:** FINtestimony  
**Subject:** Testimony in Opposition to HB 2977

Testimony in Opposition to HB 2977

To: Chair Oshiro and Members of the Finance Committee

From: Roberta R. and William R. Bailey

DATE: Thursday, February 21, 2008  
TIME: 11:30 a.m.  
PLACE: Conference Room 308  
Aloha Chair Oshiro and Committee Members,

The Coqui frog is here and efforts at eradication have shown that it is not going away; there is no use throwing more taxpayer money at it. It is much loved in Puerto Rico, and has done no harm here. Its appetite for insects has probably been beneficial. Please leave the Coqui alone; do not pass HB2977.

Sincerely,

Roberta & William Bailey  
2161 Puna St.  
Honolulu 96817  
447-9118

## FINtestimony

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**From:** Joel Fischer [jfischer@hawaii.edu]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 20, 2008 11:45 AM  
**To:** FINtestimony  
**Subject:** HB2977; FIN; 2/21; 11:30; Rm 308

**Importance:** High

HB2977, HD1, Relating to Invasive Species FIN; Chair, Rep Oshiro

PLEASE KILL THIS BILL.

This bill is entirely unwarranted. It does not recognize that the coqui are animals that deserve protection, not eradication. How is it possible that the coqui are beloved and protected in Puerto Rico, and regarded as lower than the lowest bug, deserving of ERADICATION here? Are we in Hawai'i so insensitive to God's creations that we mandate not only eradication, but priorities for eradication by geographic location, just because these creatures ANNOY some people?

Please think again; we can focus on control of any animal population that may be annoying to some. But the issue is finding humane ways of doing so, and maintaining our humanity by respecting the lives of other creatures.

Thank you.

Aloha, joel

Dr. Joel Fischer, ACSW  
President, 19-3, Democratic Party

Professor  
University of Hawai'i, School of Social Work Henke Hall Honolulu, HI 96822

"It is reasonable that everyone who asks justice should DO justice."  
Thomas Jefferson

"There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but one must take it because one's conscience tells one that it is right."  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Never, never, never quit."  
Winston Churchill

## FINtestimony

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**From:** Wayne Johnson [seiku@tmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 19, 2008 4:17 PM  
**To:** FINtestimony  
**Subject:** 2/21/2008 HB2977 Agenda #3

Could any of you burn someone you love? Could any of you burn a living being? That's what you are asking taxpayers to support in the misguided war against Coqui frogs. It takes 45 minutes to burn one of these little guys with citric acid. They are not native, but they do no harm. Yes they croak, but that's what frogs do. This so called noise is tolerated. even loved in its' native Puerto Rico. To kill because a creature is an alleged noise maker is not worthy of the Aloha spirit. OPPOSE Dr.

Wayne Johnson Honolulu

--seiku

## FINtestimony

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**From:** Cathy Goeggel [puaa@hawaii.rr.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 19, 2008 6:16 PM  
**To:** FINtestimony  
**Subject:** HB2977

Please deliver testimony to Conference Room 308 for hearing at 11:30 am on Feb. 21, 2008

Chair Oshiro and members of the Finance Committee:  
oppose: HB 2977, HD1, (HSCR561-08)

This bill would continue the throwing of taxpayer monies at a non issue; the Coqui Frog has never been proven to be a predator of endangered species; indeed, it eats large numbers of insects, many of whom are invasive themselves. The sound of the Coqui is loved in its native Puerto Rico, but reviled in Hawai'i. These tiny animals have been stomped, poisoned, burnt with acid, and still the populations survive. We suggest using limited resources on truly serious problems, not on killing tiny frogs!

Cathy Goeggel  
Director, Research and Investigations  
Animal Rights Hawai'i  
PO Box 10845  
Honolulu, HI 96816  
tel: 808.721.4211  
fax: 866.508.2997  
[www.animalrightshawaii.com](http://www.animalrightshawaii.com)  
[selkie@hawaii.rr.com](mailto:selkie@hawaii.rr.com)

## FINtestimony

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**From:** Willow [willowhi@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 19, 2008 6:45 PM  
**To:** FINtestimony  
**Subject:** I oppose HB2977

Dear Madam or Sir,

Please note my opposition to the bill regarding coqui frogs - HB2977.

I do NOT support utilizing tax money to try to eradicate this species, which so far has proven rather futile.

Although loud, they do eat a lot of insects and does not seem to be a predator of endangered species. We've already contaminated a lot of the island with stuff that has not proven to be effective in eradicating these creatures.

I propose spending my hard-earned tax money on more serious issues.

Sincerely,

Willow Aureala, Ph.D.  
P.O. Box 6306  
Ocean View, HI 96737

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