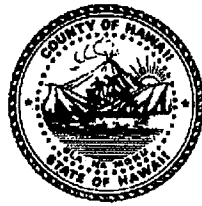


SB 696

William P. Kenoi
Mayor



William T. Takaba
Managing Director

Walter K.M. Lau
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i

891 Ululani Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720-3982 • (808) 961-8211 • Fax (808) 961-6553
KONA: 75-5706 Kuakini Highway, Suite 103 • Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740
(808) 329-5226 • Fax (808) 326-5663

February 17, 2009

The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
And Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment,
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: Senate Bill 696, RELATING TO COQUI FROGS

Dear Chair Gabbard and Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Bill 696, which would appropriate funds for grants-in-aid to the counties for coqui frog eradication for fiscal year 2010.

As you know, Hawai'i County has for years been a leader in the fight against the spread of coqui frogs despite the fact that this problem is clearly under the jurisdiction of the state Department of Agriculture. Today, our budget shortfall makes it extremely difficult for the county to continue to finance this effort.

Despite the county's financial difficulties, we stand ready to assist in state and federal efforts to control and eradicate the coqui frog. In the spirit of cooperation and collaboration, the county will provide matching funds for any money the state devotes to these efforts on Hawai'i Island.

We hope that with the assistance of the state we will be able to continue the community-based effort to control the spread of the coqui, and even to eliminate this invasive pest in those areas where it has not yet become firmly established.

Thank you for your consideration.

Aloha,

Billy Kenoi
MAYOR

LINDA LINGLE
Governor



SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DUANE K. OKAMOTO
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 Fax: (808) 973-9613

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

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2009
2:45 P.M.
ROOM 225**

**SENATE BILL NO. 696
RELATING TO COQUI FROGS**

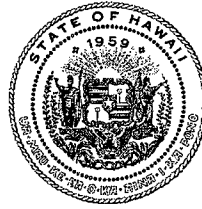
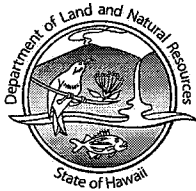
Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 696. The purpose of this bill is to appropriate funds for grants-in-aid to the city and county of Honolulu, and the counties of Maui, Kauai, and Hawaii for the eradication of coqui frogs. The Department acknowledges that this measure has merit; however, given the current fiscal difficulties, it would not be prudent to pursue enactment at this time.

Coqui frog has a limited distribution on Kauai, Maui, and Oahu and eradication may be feasible on these islands. The Department has played an essential role in the collaborative efforts to contain and eradicate infestations of coqui frogs on Oahu and Kauai. Due to these collaborative efforts, coqui frog has been restricted to the Lawai area on Kauai and eradicated from the Wahiawa area and a number of nurseries on Oahu. Department staff manage a coqui pest hotline and continue to respond to calls from the public for individual sightings of coqui frogs and removal of the frogs to ensure that coqui does not become established in new areas on these islands. Staff also continually work with nurseries through treatment and education programs to ensure that they remain coqui-free.

Coqui frog is well established and widely distributed on the Big Island making eradication unfeasible. The Department's strategy on this island is to aid landowners and nurseries through our sprayer loan and hot water treatment programs and through public outreach.

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
LAURA H. THIELEN
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT**

**Tuesday, February 17, 2009
2:45 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 225**

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 696
RELATING TO COQUI FROGS**

Senate Bill 696 proposes to appropriate funds from general revenues and grant these funds to each of the counties to conduct coqui frog eradication efforts. The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) recognizes the need for coqui frog control and eradication efforts, however, given the current fiscal difficulties, it would not be prudent to pursue enactment at this time.

The Department recognizes coqui frogs as injurious wildlife and an invasive pest. Coqui frogs are only one of several invasive species that have come to the attention of the public. The Department along with its partner departments in the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) is tasked with strategically addressing all invasive species. The Department's approach is to support funding a broad, comprehensive program of invasive species effort through the HISC, so that such control efforts can be carried out in a coordinated and strategic manner. Limiting funds to only one species will reduce the ability of HISC to address most pressing needs in a flexible and adaptable manner.

LAURA H. THIELEN
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

RUSSELL Y. TSUJI
FIRST DEPUTY

KEN C. KAWAHARA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING

FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS



The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
923 Nu'uuanu Avenue
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

Tel (808) 537-4508
Fax (808) 545-2019

nature.org/hawaii

Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
Regarding S.B. 696 Relating to Coqui Frogs
Senate Committee on Energy & Environment
Tuesday, February 17, 2009, 2:45PM, Room 225

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i is a private non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of Hawai'i'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.

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i submits the following comments regarding S.B. 696 Relating to Coqui Frogs.

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 and funding 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 also concerned about unintended financial impacts. For example, 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.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

S. Haunani Apoliona Peter D. Baldwin Christopher J. Benjamin Zadoc W. Brown, Jr. Carl A. Carlson, Jr. David C. Cole Samuel A. Cooke
Peter H. Ehrman Kenton T. Eldridge Guy Fujimura J. Stephen Goodfellow Thomas Gottlieb James J.C. Haynes Ron Higgins Peter Ho
Stanley Hong J. Douglas Ing Mark L. Johnson Dr. Kenneth Kaneshiro Bert A. Kobayashi, Jr. Faye Watanabe Kurren Duncan MacNaughton
Bill D. Mills Wayne Minami Michael T. Pfeffer H. Monty Richards Jean E. Rolles Scott Rolles James Romig Eric Yeaman



Conservation Council for Hawai'i

Testimony Submitted to the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

Hearing: Tuesday, February 17, 2009

2:45 pm

Room 225

Support for SB 696 Relating to Coqui Frogs with Recommendations

Aloha. My name is Marjorie Ziegler, and I am testifying on behalf of the Conservation Council for Hawai'i and its 6,000 members.

We support SB 696, which appropriates funds for grants-in-aid to the counties to control coqui frogs. However, we recommend that counties in which the coqui frog can still be eradicated receive sufficient funds immediately to do so. If we do not take advantage of this opportunity to eradicate now, these counties will end up like the Big Island, where it may now be impossible to eradicate the coqui frog because we waited too long to take action.

We also recommend that in the case of the Big Island, the county work with experienced agencies and individuals to: (1) restrict coqui frogs to core areas of infestation; (2) prevent increased range of coqui frogs on the Big Island; and (3) prevent the spread of coqui frogs from the Big Island to the other Hawaiian islands. We cannot just throw money at the county that makes residents feel like something is being done. We must be strategic about using limited public funds for controlling coqui frogs on the Big Island

We also recommend that programs, such as the invasive species committees and programs within the Department of Land and Natural Resources for controlling invasive species also receive adequate funding for the invasive species work these agencies focus on. Please do not neglect these programs, which are facing serious budget cuts and loss of staff in the near future. There are many other invasive species that threaten our watersheds, endangered species, ceded land Natural Area Reserves, coral reefs, and recreation areas that need our attention. If we wait too long to take action against these species, we will end up like we did on the Big Island with coqui

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



Working Today for the Nature of Tomorrow!

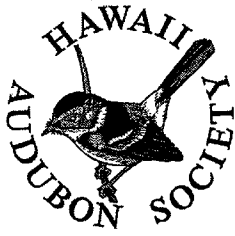
Telephone/Fax 808.593.0255 • email: info@conservehi.org • web: www.conservehi.org

P.O. Box 2923 • Honolulu, HI 96802 • Office: 250 Ward Ave., Suite 212 • Honolulu, HI 96814

Hawai'i Affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation

President: Julie Leialoha • Vice-President: Nelson Ho • Secretary: Douglas Lamerson • Treasurer: Kim Ramos

Directors: Maura O'Connor • Melora Purell • George Robertson • Executive Director: Marjorie Ziegler



For the Protection of Hawaii's Native Wildlife
HAWAII AUDUBON SOCIETY

850 Richards Street, Suite 505, Honolulu, HI 96813-4709

Phone/Fax: (808) 528-1432; hiaudsoc@pixi.com

www.hawaii Audubon.com

EMAIL: ENETestimony@Capitol.hawaii.gov

TO: Committee on Energy and Environment
Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair and Senator J. Kalani English, Vice Chair

HEARING: Tuesday, February 17, 2009; 2:45 P.M., Conference Rm. 225

Re: SB696, Relating to Coqui Frogs

Testimony in Support

Chair Gabbard and Vice Chair English, and members of Committee on Energy and Environment. My name is George Massengale, I am a long time member of the Hawai'i Audubon Society and during session I serve as their Legislative Analyst. Thank you for the opportunity to submit our testimony in support of SB696, which appropriates fund for grants-in-aid to the counties for coqui frog eradication.

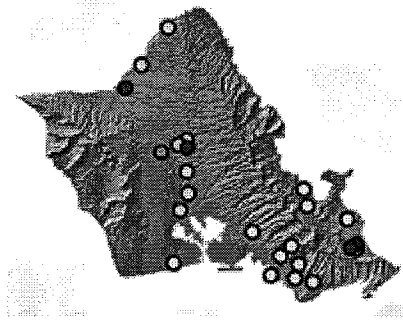
The Hawaii Audubon Society was founded in 1939, and has over 1,500 dedicated members statewide. The Society's primary mission is the protection of Hawaii's native wildlife and habitats. This includes protecting our ecosystems from invasive species. Once established, invasive species such as the Coqui frog crowd out endemic species. As the committee, I'm sure is aware, the frog was accidentally introduced into Hawaii from Puerto Rico in about 1988. Aside from being a major noise nuisance, the frogs pose a threat to Hawaii's island ecosystem. **Coqui frogs have a voracious appetite that puts Hawaii's unique insects and spiders at risk. They can also compete with endemic birds and other native fauna that rely on insects for food.** The frogs are quite adaptable to the different ecological zones and elevations in the state and have been found from sea level to 4,000 feet elevation (at sites in Volcano on Hawaii). **Scientists are also concerned that an established coqui frog population may serve as a readily available food source when brown tree snakes are accidentally introduced in Hawaii.**

Coqui populations have exploded in the last 15 years from a single infestation on the Big Island. They are now entrenched on Oahu. The map below shows Coqui frog distribution on Oahu.

Red dots = Active populations

Yellow dots = Single confirmed sightings/capture

Green dot = Successful eradication

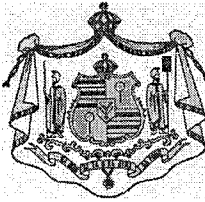


The society believes that if eradication efforts are not seriously undertaken on Oahu, Coqui populations will continue to expand, and will eventually pose a threat to several of our endangered bird species including the Oahu Amakihi and the Oahu Elepaio. Both species are found in the northern Ko'olau and Wai'anae mountains.

The Hawaii Audubon Society strongly supports SB696, and we urge this committee to vote to pass this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure today.

Sincerely,
George Massengale, JD
Legislative Analyst



Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs
P. O. Box 1135
Honolulu, Hawai`i 96807

**TESTIMONY OF LEIMOMI KHAN, PRESIDENT
IN SUPPORT OF**

SB 696 - Relating to Coqui Frogs

Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

Hearing date, time and place:

Tuesday, February 17 , 2009 - 2:45 p.m. - Conf. Rm. 225

Aloha Chairperson Gabbard, Vice-Chair English and Members of the Committee.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 696, which appropriates funds for grants-in-aid to the counties for coqui frog eradication. The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs, is in strong support of measures that would result in the eradication of coqui frogs.

On October 28, 2006, the Association adopted Resolution No. 2006-58, Urging the County of Hawai`i and the State Department of Land and Natural Resources to Create and Enforce Legal Remedies to Stop the Spread of Coqui Frogs. This Resolution cited the spread of coqui frogs due to imported plants from the U.S. mainland, the severe infestation problems from Hilo to Hamakua, Puna, Kona, Waipi`o, parts of Waimea and Kohala via potted plants, vehicles and loads of construction and landscaping materials.

We were also concerned about infestation in conservation areas such as the Hakalau National Wildlife Refuge, which threatens to render certain bird species extinct.

The Association supports funding measures that would result in the eradication of coqui frogs.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



MISC

MAUI INVASIVE SPECIES COMMITTEE

Testimony of the Maui Invasive Species Committee
Supporting S.B. 696 Relating to Coqui Frogs
Before the Senate Committee on Energy & Environment
Conference Room 225

February 17, 2009, 2:45 PM

The Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC) supports S.B. 696 with reservations.

Additional funding to stop the spread of coqui frogs is unquestionably needed. After three years of concentrated efforts to address infestations of coqui frogs, phenomenal progress controlling the frogs has been made on Kauai, Oahu, and Maui, while critical research continues on the island of Hawaii to explore new methods and approaches to contain or eradicate these noisy pests. Kauai is on the verge of eradicating the single major infestation on the island and a rapid-response system quickly addresses new reports of frogs. On Oahu, the substantial infestation at Wahiawa has been declared eradicated – no frogs have been heard for well over a year; however, coqui frogs sporadically turn up across the island. On Maui, seven of the fourteen known infestations have been eradicated and five more are on target for eradication. One Maui site suffers from repeat introductions. The largest Maui site, Maliko Gulch, is slated for an experimental approach later this year that could prove helpful in addressing large-scale complex infestations.

These accomplishments across the State are at risk of failing if continued funding is not available. Without consistent control efforts, new populations will become established and sites that are almost eradicated will balloon to previous levels, essentially wasting previous investments of time, money, and local support. Some sites may become impossible to eradicate as the window for containment closes. On Maui, we have already witnessed the spread of frogs down Maliko Gulch as we waited for funding to become available. Continued support from the State is needed to ensure forward momentum and, ultimately, success.

This testimony in support is made with reservations. It is well understood that Hawaii faces unprecedented budget shortfalls. The Invasive Species Committees are anticipating significant budget cuts, possibly up to 50%, under the current proposed budget for the Hawaii Invasive Species Council. Additional funding for work on coqui frogs could help address that shortfall; however, it should not come at the expense of other conservation programs or at the expense of the comprehensive approach to invasive species coordinated under the Hawaii Invasive Species Council. MISC does not support a reallocation of the Natural Area Reserve Fund or a reduction in the HISC budget as a means to increase funding for work on coqui frogs.

Thank you for your consideration.