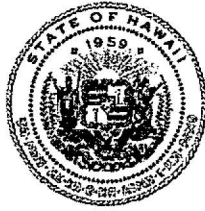


LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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

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**Testimony of
LAURA H. THIELEN
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on
FINANCE**

**Friday, March 26, 2010
11:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308**

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 696, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO COQUI FROGS**

Senate Bill 696, Senate Draft 1 proposes to authorize the Counties to use a portion of their share of the Transient Accommodations Tax (TAT) to conduct coqui frog eradication efforts. The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports funding of work on invasive species, including coqui, but recommends that it be an integrated, broad and efficient approach to address multiple species through the strategic Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) process and not be limited to a single species approach. And while the Department encourages the Counties to participate in invasive species efforts including coqui, the Department, however, defers to the respective Counties regarding their fiscal priorities utilizing their share of the TAT.

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 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

LINDA LINGLE
Governor



SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DUANE OKAMOTO
Deputy to the Chairperson

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TESTIMONY OF SANDRA LEE KUNIMOTO
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 2010
11:00 A.M.
ROOM 308

SENATE BILL 696, S.D. 1
RELATING TO COQUI FROGS

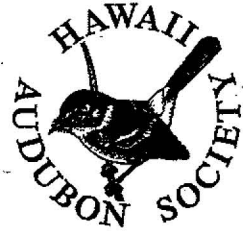
Chairperson Oshiro and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 696, S.D. 1. The purpose of this bill is to authorize the counties to use a portion of their share of the transient accommodations tax for coqui frog eradication and requires each county to adopt an ordinance to exercise the authority granted by this measure. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture supports this bill, but defers to the counties since it directly impacts them.

The coqui frog is now widespread in the East Hawaii area and is beyond eradication at this time on the Island of Hawaii with available tools. However, there are many areas on the Island of Hawaii not yet infested with the frog. In the past when there was funding, community groups worked together with county and the agencies to control frog populations through community based treatment programs.

The frog has limited distribution on Kauai, Maui, and Oahu and eradication is feasible on these islands.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.



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

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March 25, 2010

TO: Committee on Finance
Representative Marcus R. Oshiro, Chair
Representative Marilyn B. Lee, Vice Chair

HEARING: Friday, March 26; 11:00 A.M., Conference Room 308

Re: SB696, SD2, Relating to Coqui Frogs

Testimony in Support

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee, and members of Committee on Finance. On behalf of the Hawaii Audubon Society, we offer our testimony in support of SB696, SD2, which authorizes the counties to use a portion of their share of the transient accommodations tax for coqui frog eradication. In addition it would require each county to adopt an ordinance to exercise the authority granted by this measure.

The Hawaii Audubon Society was founded in 1939, and is Hawaii's oldest conservation organization. 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 including 32 endangered bird species located throughout the Hawaiian Islands.

The Coqui 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).

Coqui populations have exploded in the last 15 years from a single infestation on the Big Island. They now entrenched on Oahu and there are local infestations on Maui and Kauai.

With funding assistance from the transit accommodations tax our counties will be able to continue 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. We urge the committee to pass this measure.

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

Respectfully,

George Massengale, JD
Legislative Analyst