



State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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TESTIMONY OF SCOTT E. ENRIGHT
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

THURSDAY JANUARY 30, 2014
9:20 A.M.
ROOM 312

HOUSE BILL NO. 2431
RELATING TO THE LITTLE FIRE ANT

Chairperson Wooley and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 2431. This bill appropriates funds to the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) for the creation of a statewide public awareness campaign on the little fire ant (LFA).

Hawaii faces many invasive species threats across the islands, including the little fire ant. Originally from South America, LFA is considered among the world's most invasive species. LFA are tiny ants, measuring 1/16th long and are pale orange in color. LFA can produce painful stings and large red welts and may cause blindness in pets. They can build up very large colonies on the ground, in trees and agricultural areas and nurseries.

A statewide public awareness campaign on the LFA will help efforts to contain the spread of LFA, and the Hawaii Department of Agriculture supports this measure, but defers to the HISC as to how the public awareness campaign would be run.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

POST OFFICE BOX 621
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Testimony of
WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
AGRICULTURE

Thursday, January 30, 2014
9:20 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 312

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2431
RELATING TO THE LITTLE FIRE ANT

House Bill 2431 proposes to appropriate funds to the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC), administratively housed at the Department of Land and Natural Resource (Department) to create a statewide public awareness campaign relating to the Little Fire Ant (*Wasmannia auropunctata*). **The Department supports this measure and offers the following comments.**

The stinging, invasive Little Fire Ant is a primary threat to Hawaii's environment, agriculture, and economy, as well as to the health and way of life of Hawaii's people. The HISC has provided key funding support to the Hawaii Ant Lab, which is the State's primary resource for research on invasive ant control, and has funded outreach positions at the island-based Invasive Species Committees, for which Little Fire Ant is a target species. The Department recognizes the need for Little Fire Ant awareness, prevention, and control to be priorities for immediate action.

The Executive Budget request currently includes \$1,000,000 in supplemental funds for the HISC, to be added to \$750,000 that was previously appropriated for Fiscal Year (FY) 15 at the start of this biennium. With recent discoveries of new invasive species infestations, the Governor and the Department are now supporting the \$5,000,000 supplemental appropriation proposed in the joint priority package. This is the amount calculated by HISC support staff to maintain project capacity and function in FY15. The Department supports this additional appropriation measure, provided that this appropriation does not replace or adversely impact appropriations for other priorities in the Executive Budget request.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to provide these comments.

WILLIAM J. AILA, JR.
CHAIRPERSON
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LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
Supporting the Intent of H.B. 2431 Relating to the Little Fire Ant
House Committee on Agriculture
Thursday, January 30, 2014, 9:20 AM, Room 312

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i is a private non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which life in these islands depends. The Conservancy has helped to protect nearly 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i. Today, we actively manage more than 35,000 acres in 11 nature preserves on Maui, Hawai'i, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, and Kaua'i. We also work closely with government agencies, private parties and communities on cooperative land and marine management projects.

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i supports the intent of H.B. 2431 Relating to the Little Fire Ant. We appreciate the crisis situation that exists with respect to the little fire ant (LFA) and we support a strong and coordinated response to address this invasion on multiple islands.

However, we hope that the necessary response to LFA will be additive as opposed to shifting funds away from other important priorities that could prevent the State and its partners from also devoting appropriate attention and funding to variety of pest issues across the islands. For example, in Fiscal Year 2007 the Legislature's provision of specific funding for coqui frog 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.

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 important coordination, collaboration, and prioritization amongst government agencies and partners based on a variety of issues including human health, safety and well-being, economic and agricultural harm, and the threat to the health and function of the natural environment.

Therefore, we respectfully ask that this Committee and the Legislature avoid a piecemeal response and instead take a comprehensive approach of providing significant and consistent funding to address the full range of invasive species priorities across the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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HAWAII PEST CONTROL ASSOCIATION

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January 30, 2014

Testimony To: House Committee on Agriculture
Representative Jessica Wooley, Chair

Presented By: Tim Lyons, CAE
Executive Director

Subject: H.B. 2431 - Relating to the Little Fire Ant
H.B. 2469 - Relating to Invasive Species

Chair Wooley and Members of the Committee:

I am Tim Lyons, Executive Director of the Hawaii Pest Control Association.

While we support the general intent of this bill, we would employ you to consider the use of the private sector. Private pest control operators are trained every month on ant control, their biology and the better methods of control. As an example, the little fire ant typically harbors in trees and bushes up as much as six (6) feet high. You cannot use granular baits on this pest and what you use has to be containerized.

We very much feel that the little fire ant is quickly getting out of control just like the coqui frog.

HPCA attempted to help out on the coqui frog problem only to have the Department of

Agriculture give sprayer units to homeowners so they could utilize citric acid. As a result, because they could do it that way, they stopped hiring pest control operators. You know the result of the coqui frog infestation. We do not want to see the same thing happen with the little fire ant and have them infest papaya's and bananas, etc. and then not be able to distribute them.

Again, we are not opposed to an appropriation but we think the appropriation needs to be channeled to the private industry who control ants on a daily basis and controls for the little fire ant are all together, not that much different. The need for a pilot project is questionable.

Based on the above, we support additional resources for the little fire ant control however, we think they should be channeled in a more appropriate manner.

Thank you.

onishi2-Micah-Seth

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Tuesday, January 28, 2014 10:39 PM
To: AGRtestimony
Cc: lynhowe1946@yahoo.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for HB2431 on Jan 30, 2014 09:20AM

HB2431

Submitted on: 1/28/2014

Testimony for AGR on Jan 30, 2014 09:20AM in Conference Room 312

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lyn Howe	Individual	Support	No

Comments: This is a threat that is so serious that we must stop the movement of LFA. The east side of Hawaii island is in danger of losing its agriculture opporutnities and its property values due to the amazingly rapid spread of this ant. Please we must do something now, we are already too late on this. thank you

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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