

HB 2675,
HD1

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

SHAN S. TSUTSUI
Lt. Governor



State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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SCOTT E. ENRIGHT
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Deputy to the Chairperson

**TESTIMONY OF SCOTT E. ENRIGHT
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND AND AGRICULTURE

March 14, 2016
2:45 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 224

HOUSE BILL NO. 2675 HD 1
RELATING TO RAPID OHIA DEATH

Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2675 HD1. This bill appropriates general funds to support pathology research on rapid ohia death. The Department supports this measure provided that it does not impact the priorities submitted in the department's executive budget.

Rapid Ohia Death (ROD) is known to have infested at least 35,000 acres on the Big Island and continues to spread throughout that island and has not been found on other islands. It has left a devastating impact to the forests killing 50-90% of the trees in infested areas. The Department of Agriculture (HDOA) established a quarantine on August 25, 2015 to prevent its spread from the Big Island to the un-infested islands. This is under our authority which enables us to create an interim rule to govern the transport of flora and fauna into and within the State to protect agriculture and the environment.

ROD is a serious disease of Hawaii's ohia forests and the loss of these trees would have a devastating impact on our forest lands and natural resources. The purpose of this bill is to fund research to study the pathogen that causes ROD. This research is critically needed in order to move forward with the control and mitigation of this disease.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.



DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

KEKOA KALUHIWA
FIRST DEPUTY

JEFFREY T. PEARSON, P.E.
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on
WATER, LAND, AND AGRICULTURE

Monday, March 14, 2016
2:45 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2675, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO RAPID OHIA DEATH

House Bill 2675, House Draft 1 proposes to appropriate funds to the Department of Agriculture (DOA) for research related to Rapid Ohia Death. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure provided that this appropriation does not adversely impact appropriations for other priorities in the Executive Supplemental Budget request or any existing funding to the Department's programs.**

The recent spread of Rapid Ohia Death (ROD) on Hawaii Island threatens the State's most important forest species and requires urgent action. Recent surveys conducted by the Department found 34,000 acres of ohia forest potentially killed by this disease, which is more than double the area mapped in 2014. The Department is working closely with DOA, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service and Agriculture Research Service, University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture, and others to understand ROD and mitigate its spread where possible. Due to the lack of knowledge about this disease, many questions still need to be answered before effectively managing the outbreak or providing information and suggestions to the public.

The level of resources needed to answer important questions will need to be sustained over several years. Currently staff working on the project are managing multiple projects and need to hire qualified individuals to work full time on the issue. Initial funds have been secured, but will need to be sustained. The Department estimates that \$600,000 would be needed, in combination with federal and private foundation funds, to support positions and operations at the University of Hawaii, USDA, and the Department's Division of Forestry and Wildlife in pathological research, survey and monitoring, and outreach and education.

Despite a lack of full understanding about this disease, all of the activities mentioned are vital to an effective response; therefore funding needs will be ongoing. The Department will continue to work closely with DOA and other partners to share knowledge and coordinate actions so resources are used efficiently.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Water, Land, and Agriculture
Monday, March 14, 2016 at 2:45 p.m.

By

Robert Bley-Vroman, Chancellor

And

Maria Gallo, Dean

And

J. Kenneth Grace, Associate Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 2675 HD1 – RELATING TO RAPID OHIA DEATH

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara, and members of the Senate Committee on Water, Land, and Agriculture, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 2675 HD1, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for research to combat rapid ohia death.

Rapid ohia death, caused by a fungal pathogen first identified in 2014, has spread extremely rapidly on the Big Island, from 15,000 acres of ohia forest infected by the disease in 2014, to 34,000 in 2016. Ohia makes up half the acreage, and half the woody biomass, of all the forests in Hawai'i. Loss of ohia across the state will severely impact our endangered forest birds that depend on the trees for nesting sites, and will intensify invasion of the forest by invasive plant species such as strawberry guava that use more water than ohia, with negative impacts on the watershed. From a cultural standpoint, it is difficult to imagine Hawai'i without ohia and the lehua flowers. Further, forests of dead trees will greatly damage tourism, particularly on the Big Island, and greatly increase fire hazards.

The nursery industry in Hawaii has also been impacted by rapid ohia death, since it has been necessary to impose a quarantine on soil movement from the Big Island to prevent possible spread of the disease. Further, spread of the disease to agricultural crops cannot be ruled out at this point.

Researchers from state and federal agencies and the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) are working to address the spread and management of this severe plant disease, but their efforts are limited by resources and by the absence of prior information on this devastating and very rapidly spreading forest disease. HB 2675 HD1 would appropriate funds in the order of \$325,000 to increase these research efforts before the disease devastates Big Island forests, and spreads across the state.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2675 HD1.



**Department of Land and Natural Resources
Aha Moku Advisory Committee
State of Hawaii
Post Office Box 621
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809**

Testimony of
Piilani Kaawaloa
Aha Moku Advisory Committee – Moku O Keawe (Hawaii)

Before the Senate Committee on
Water, Land and Agriculture

Monday, March 14, 2016
2:45 P.M.
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

**In Consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2675 HD 1
RELATING TO RAPID OHIA DEATH**

House Bill 2675 HD 1 appropriates funds for research to combat rapid ohia death. **The Aha Moku SUPPORTS this measure.**

The Aha Moku encompasses the eight main Hawaiian Islands, which in turn is comprised of 47 moku and 607 ahupua'a, each one of which is individual and unique with its own natural resources. The commonality among all of them is that the ohia tree is unique and sacred to the Hawaiian culture as a whole and with the exception of Kahoolawe and Niihau; the other islands have them where the people have used the ohia in their traditional practices for generations.

The focus of the Aha Moku System, as stated by this Legislature is to assist the State in the protection and sustainability of its distinctive natural and cultural resources by bringing forward Native Hawaiian empirical resource methodology that together with scientific expertise may further protect our natural assets. However, in the case of the ohia, we do not know where the disease came from. We do support every effort to find this out, and find a cure for this as soon as possible.

Today, it is often difficult to protect these resources because of the influx of invasive species which, because they are not native to Hawaii, often causes irreparable harm to our endemic and indigenous flora and fauna. This in turn does great harm to our cultural resources. We believe this measure is greatly needed. On our island, Moku O Keawe (Hawaii), alone, we currently have to deal with the rapid demise of our sacred ohia trees. In time, if a cure is not found, this will eventually spread to all islands. All of this directly impacts our native Hawaiian resource practices. We need to find a way together, to find a cure for this deadly disease.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony and we urge this committee pass this measure.



Conservation Council
for Hawai'i

Hawai'i's voice for wildlife

Kō Hawai'i leo no nā holoholona lōhiu



Testimony Submitted to the Senate Committee on Water, Land, and Agriculture
Hearing: Monday, March 14, 2016 2:45 pm
Conference Room 224

In Support of HB 2675 HD 1 Relating to Rapid 'Ohi'a Death

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara, and Members of the Committee.

Aloha. Conservation Council for Hawai'i supports HB 2675 HD 1, which appropriates funds for research to combat rapid 'ohi'a death.

However, we urge you to increase the appropriation of \$200,000 and \$325,000, which were previously proposed in past versions of the house and senate bill, to an amount that is sufficient for research and protection of our watersheds.

'Ohi'a lehua is a dominant forest tree in our watersheds and habitat for rare and endangered species. Rapid 'ohi 'a death/wilt is a major threat to our native forests and watersheds, but it is not the only threat. Even if we are able to control or slow ROD, our native forests and watersheds will continue to decline as a result of additional threats, including introduced feral and game mammals (pigs, goats, sheep, and deer), invasive plants (such as strawberry guava, miconia, and others), plant pests, and diseases. Water and watersheds are important.

Our native forests and watersheds are worth way more than \$325,000. Please do more to protect our public lands and trust resources for future generations. Provide more funding for watershed protection and invasive species control. Ask your colleagues to stop nickel and diming important land conservation programs under the Department of Land and Natural Resources and Department of Agriculture.

Please support HB 2675 HD 1.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marjorie Ziegler".

Marjorie Ziegler



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March 14, 2016

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND AND AGRICULTURE

TESTIMONY ON HB 2675, HD1
RELATING TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Room 224
2:45 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara, and Members of the Committee:

I am Randy Cabral, President of the Hawaii Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,900 farm family members statewide, and serves as Hawaii's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic and educational interest of our diverse agricultural community.

HFB strongly supports HB 1597, HD1, which appropriates funds for research to combat rapid ohia death.

Watersheds are the lifeblood of our communities. It is important not just to agriculture but to our social and environmental health. The spread of rapid ohia death has been alarming and its' management before spreading to other islands is very critical. Many of the other islands depend on surface water for their drinking and irrigation needs. Loss of trees will severely impact watersheds.

HFB respectfully requests your support of HB 2675, HD1.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide our opinion on this important matter.



The Nature Conservancy, Hawai'i Program
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Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
Supporting H.B. 2675 HD1 Relating to Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death
Senate Committee on Water, Land, and Agriculture
Monday, March 14, 2016, 2:45PM, Room 224

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 depends. The Conservancy has helped to protect nearly 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i. We manage 40,000 acres in 14 preserves and work in 19 coastal communities to help protect the near-shore reefs and waters of the main Hawaiian Islands. We forge partnerships with government, private parties and communities to protect Hawai'i's important watershed forests and coral reefs.

The Nature Conservancy supports H.B. 2675 HD1. We appreciate the crisis situation that exists with respect to Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death (ROD) and the acute circumstances on Hawai'i island with this disease and other pests of the environment, agriculture, and human health and well-being. We support a strong and coordinated response to ROD that is threatening the dominant native tree species in the Hawaiian forest—a tree that is central to the forests' ecological, cultural and watershed values statewide.

We also hope that providing the necessary and critical support for Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death will be additive and not prevent the Legislature, the Administration and partners from also devoting appropriate attention and funding to the full range of pest issues across the islands. We are concerned about unintended financial impacts of a piecemeal approach to invasive species funding. 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 important 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.

Therefore, we respectfully ask that the Committee and the Legislature also take a comprehensive approach of providing significant and consistent funding to address invasive species prevention, early detection, rapid response, control, research, and outreach priorities across the state. The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council—or the proposed Hawai'i Invasive Species Authority ([SB2799 SD2](#))—is the appropriate multi-agency venue for this broader effort. This approach 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

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