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

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

March 18, 2016
8:30 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 312

HR143/HCR197
REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU TO EVALUATE A
PROPOSAL TO MOVE THE PLANT QUARANTINE BRANCH TO THE DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION

Chairpersons Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HR143/HCR197. This resolution requests the Legislative Reference Bureau to evaluate the duties and facilities of the Plant Quarantine Branch of the Department of Agriculture and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of a proposed move to the Department of Transportation. The department respectfully opposes this resolution.

The department agrees with the statements on the importance in preventing these pests from entering Hawaii and with the negative impact of invasive species. To address this, the department has been actively engaged in a biosecurity program. We consider our biosecurity program a high priority program within the department and are committed to continuing the program and improving it. To this end, the department has continued to secure outside funding for our biosecurity program bringing in \$4.5 million in the past two fiscal years. This is to prevent the entry and establishment of pests such as brown tree snake, coconut rhinoceros beetle, red imported fire ant, and Africanized bees, among others. The department has also continued to assess the effectiveness of its inspection program at the ports of entry. The plant quarantine branch conducts periodic enhanced inspections to assess the risks of all agricultural commodities imported. Based on these assessments the inspectors focus inspections on the high risk commodities, thus not wasting efforts on the low risk commodities. These low risk commodities are inspected less frequently. This has allowed the branch to be more effective in its inspections and interceptions of invasive species. This resolution cites a decrease in interceptions of 80% over the last three years (the actual decrease was about 35%). These numbers are not a failure but actually a testament to the



effectiveness of targeting inspections to high risk commodities resulting in more efficient use of limited resources for inspections. Unlike previous years, time is not being wasted collecting pests that are already established in Hawaii and will not have any impact once they pass through the port. The inspections are focused on commodities and pests which will have a negative impact on agriculture, the environment and the people of Hawaii and prevents their entry.

The resolution requests the Legislative Reference Bureau to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of a proposed movement of the plant quarantine branch from the department of agriculture to the department of transportation. This idea appears to be based on a misconception of the mandates, duties, and activities of the plant quarantine branch. The premise in the resolution is that the plant quarantine branch has been ineffective in its inspections at the ports and that movement of the branch into the department of transportation will correct this. Not only is this not the case but the duties of the plant quarantine branch are much broader than conducting inspections at the harbors and airports. The duties also include many duties outside the ports. These include certification of nurseries, nursery inspections, response to sightings of illegal animals such as snakes, permitting for the import of animals, plants, microorganisms, evaluation of the risk in import requests, inspections of importers facilities, legal investigations of smuggling, and other duties. None of these are related to department of transportation functions, mandates, nor are they conducted or related to ports.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.



Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association

Testimony for the Twenty Eighth Legislature, 2016
State of Hawaii

HR143: REQUESTING THE LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU TO EVALUATE A PROPOSAL TO MOVE THE PLANT QUARANTINE BRANCH TO THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

My name is Eric S. Tanouye and I am the President for the Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association. HFNA is a statewide umbrella organization with approximately 300 members. Our membership is made up with breeders, hybridizers, propagators, growers, shippers, wholesalers, retailers, educators, and the allied industry, which supports our efforts in agriculture.

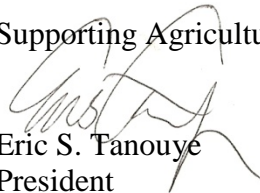
The Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association (HFNA) **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** HR 143. We are thoroughly frustrated with the administration's lack of transparency and communication. The department has failed to provide annual reports required by law for the last three years. The pest interception rate has fallen in the last two years because: 1) inspectors are inspecting less and are focusing on propagative plants. Therefore, we feel the audit is necessary.

A comprehensive implementation of Hawaii's Biosecurity program is an action that is sorely needed and is essential for our industry. HFNA believes that building upon the current, though stalled, Biosecurity System, would be the most effective, cost-efficient and logical approach. We also hope to be able to provide input as an industry. As in the past, when we met regularly to discuss issues and worked together on initiatives.

This is an important and essential program, which has been stalled for too long.

We thank you for your consideration of HR143. If you have any questions at this time, I would be happy to discuss them and can be reached by phone at 808-959-3535 ext 22, cell 960-1433 and email eric@greenpointnursery.com.

Supporting Agriculture and Hawaii,



Eric S. Tanouye
President

Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association