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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

HR144/HCR198
REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT
AUDIT OF THE PLANT QUARANTINE BRANCH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE

Chairpersons Tsuji and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HR144/HCR198. This resolution requests the auditor to conduct a financial and management audit of the plant quarantine branch and make recommendations on the resources necessary for the branch to fully carry out its purpose and responsibilities. The Department of Agriculture understands the intent of this measure and offers comments.

The department agrees with the statements on the importance in preventing these pests from entering Hawaii and with the negative impact of invasive species. The department has continued to secure outside funding for its 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.

The department feels that the Plant Quarantine Branch has worked hard to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its operations over the last three years. The Department is open to an audit to assess this effectiveness and to point out new directions that can be taken to improve on this. We would like to note that such an audit will require personnel to take time from their everyday inspection duties as current resources in the Plant Quarantine Branch are limited.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony



Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association

Testimony for the Twenty Eighth Legislature, 2016
State of Hawaii

HR144: REQUESTING THE AUDITOR TO CONDUCT A FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT AUDIT OF THE PLANT QUARANTINE BRANCH OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

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.

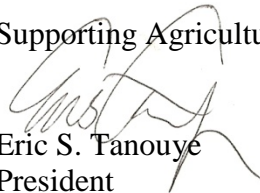
The Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association (HFNA) **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** HR 144. We are thoroughly frustrated with the administration's lack of transparency and communication. The department has failed to provide annual reports required by law for the last three years. The pest interception rate 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 HR144. 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