



Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs

P. O. Box 1135
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LATE

SB1239 RELATING TO RAPID OHIA DEATH

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Monday, 02/13/17; 1:15pm; Rm.204

Aloha Chairman Gabbard, vice chair Riviere and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment. I am Annelie Amaral, president of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs and we support this bill. We are a kama`aina organization originally founded in 1918 as the Honolulu Hawaiian Civic Club by Delegate to Congress Kuhio to advocate for the passage of the Hawaiian Homes Bill then before the Congress. In time, and in response to the need, in 1959 the movement became an Association with currently sixty seven component clubs throughout Hawaii and in sixteen states on the continent.

Each year at an annual convention there is spirited discussion on issues-of-the-day facing native Hawaiians and native Hawaiian culture, and clubs prepare resolutions to address these topics of concern. Memorial and congratulatory resolutions are also submitted by individual clubs, but there are usually thirty to forty of general civic interest and importance.

In the 2016 convention a resolution of great concern was Resolution #16-33, *Urging the Department of Land and Natural Resources and the Hawaii Tourism Authority To Educate All Tour Companies, All Tourists, All Visitors and All Residents to Hawaii Island On the Rapid Ohia Death.*

The ohia lehua (*metrosideros polymorpha*) undoubtedly traveled to Hawaii with early waves of Polynesians and can also be found in other Pacific Islands establishing yet another solid link among Pacific Island peoples. The ohia lehua has many manifestations depending upon the environment, but under all conditions it is culturally and spiritually significant to Hawaiians as well as other Polynesians.

Ohia lehua was once prevalent as forests on thousands of acres on Hawaii Island especially, and to be confronted with dying forests is devastating to native Hawaiians. Today many Hawaiians see this loss as an echo of their own faded sovereignty.

We urge the State Department of Land and Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture to research this phenomenon and to provide public information notices, bulletins and inspections as an immediate first step to stop spreading the fungal pathogen (*ceratocystic fimbriata*) that carries the disease. Another step would include making travelers aware of their role in disease prevention by not carrying the plants and flowers from one destination to another.

We absolutely support SB 1239 and the legislature providing funds necessary to carry out a program of protection and eradication of “Rapid Ohia Death” through the network of relevant State agencies. We further urge a public relations program that will alert people to this disease that is killing the ohia lehua before there is a point of no return. The sooner the better.

Thank you for the opportunity to bring this to your attention. The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs will do our share to help rid Hawaii of this disease.

Mahalo.

Contact: jalna.keala2@hawaiiantel.net



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SB1239
RELATING TO RAPID 'ŌHI'A DEATH
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

February 13, 2017

1:15 p.m.

Room 224

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) Committee on Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment will recommend that the Board of Trustees **SUPPORT** SB1239, which would appropriate funds for research on the prevention and mitigation of Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death (ROD), which has prompted a state of emergency for Hawai'i's native 'ōhi'a forests.

Found nowhere else in the world, 'ōhi'a, or *Metrosideros polymorpha*, is a key component of Hawai'i's culture, ecology, and environment. Native Hawaiians have developed a range of medicinal, spiritual, practical, and other uses for all parts of 'ōhi'a. Many aspects of our islands' ecosystems also depend upon the unique characteristics of 'ōhi'a, and a number of endemic and often endangered species have evolved to form close relationships with what is still one of the most common trees in Hawai'i. Moreover, 'ōhi'a forests are recognized as critical to watershed protection and aquifer recharge, a growing concern given the anticipated impacts of an increasing population base, decreasing rainfall trends, and climate change.

This keystone species now faces the unprecedented threat of ROD, which has the potential to eliminate 'ōhi'a throughout the Hawaiian archipelago. ROD has been observed across Hawai'i Island, killing off of vast tracts of 'ōhi'a, and threatening the integrity of the island's native forest ecosystems. ROD can be observed on OHA's own lands, affecting approximately 60% of the 26,000-acre Wao Kele o Puna (WKOP), the largest native, low-land forest left in Hawai'i.

To combat this threat, OHA has conducted widespread surveys of Wao Kele o Puna, attended or participated in a number of ROD forums, solicited community input on mitigation and prevention ideas, hosted ROD experts at OHA's community meetings, and encouraged preventative measures by all seeking to access WKOP. ROD mitigation and adaptation initiatives will be heavily considered in OHA's Comprehensive Management Plan for WKOP, and OHA is currently in the process of granting the University of Hawai'i access to WKOP to conduct a range of ROD research.

Given the imminent threat ROD poses on 'ōhi'a and the cultural and natural practices and resources that depend on it, the appropriations considered by this bill are a timely and necessary investment, to protect one of our most significant plant species.

Accordingly, OHA urges the Committee to **PASS** SB1239. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

LATE

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, February 13, 2017 12:26 PM
To: AEN Testimony
Cc: dsfrohlich@gmail.com
Subject: *Submitted testimony for SB1239 on Feb 13, 2017 13:15PM*

SB1239

Submitted on: 2/13/2017
Testimony for AEN on Feb 13, 2017 13:15PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Danielle Frohlich	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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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SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAII

MĀLAMA I KA HONUA. Cherish the Earth.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Monday, February 13, 2017 1:15PM Room 224

In Support SB1239 Relating to Rapid Ohia Death

LATE

Aloha Chair Gabbard and Members of the AEN Committee:

On behalf of our 12,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **strongly supports** SB1239 to appropriate funding to combat Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death. This bill is crucial to the health of our native forests. We urge this funding to be dedicated in addition (and not in place of) the Department's funding request through the budget HB100.

What SB1239 will do

This bill will help the Department of Land and Natural Resources combat the deadly and dangerous disease rapidly spreading through our forests by appropriating \$200,000 in general funds for critical research and emergency abatement and control measures. The bill also requires a report to the next Legislature.

Why We Must Save the 'Ōhi'a

'Ōhi'a is the prime constituent of Hawai'i's native forests; found in almost every ecological niche from sea level to 7,000 feet elevation. The loss of 'ōhi'a trees would devastate our forests, trigger rampant spread of invasive species, and ultimately suffocate the fledging native tree market.

'Ōhi'a are the cornerstone of native upland ecosystems. Our forest watersheds can absorb and retain the water we use for drinking because of 'ōhi'a trees. Endangered forest birds feed on the nectar of 'Ōhi'a blossoms, snails graze on algae and fungi on its leaves, and insect communities live in its foliage. We would lose all of this if Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death is not controlled immediately.

'Ōhi'a are a defense against the spread of invasive species. Because of their strength and versatility, 'ōhi'a grow in a wide range of climates and conditions. This makes them a key warrior in the battle against albezia, eucalyptus, and strawberry guava, which are known threats to Hawai'i's natural environment, public health, and safety. This dangerous, harmful trees would take over if the 'ōhi'a is lost to Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death.

'Ōhi'a is sacred to several deities of Hawai'i: Ku, Pele, Hi'iaka, and Laka. The wood was used to make ki'i, temple carvings, altars, and other ceremonial structures. The plant is used in traditional herbal medicine and to make leis – could you imagine the Merrie Monarch

Festival without lehua leis? Not only would the loss of 'ōhi'a trees be detrimental to our island ecosystem but would be a huge cultural loss to Hawai'i.

'Ōhi'a are also helping to cultivate new markets in native trees. The beauty and diversity of this tree make it a favorite choice for commercial and residential landscapes. Native plant nurseries have built whole businesses around the sale of 'Ōhi'a. These markets would be lost if Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death goes unchecked.

We cannot afford to lose the battle against Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death. For these reasons, we strongly urge this Committee to move this measure forward. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Mahalo,



Marti Townsend
Director