



LATE

SB636
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES
Senate Committee on Water and Land
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

February 10, 2017

2:45 p.m.

Room 224

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) Committee on Beneficiary Advocacy and Empowerment will recommend that the Board of Trustees **SUPPORT** SB636, which would establish a special fund within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to address new and imminent invasive species threatening native ecology. SB636 would facilitate the efficient removal of these species before they become established and more difficult if not impossible to eliminate.

Invasive species can significantly impact our native ecosystems, agriculture, economy, and culture. The effects of biological invasion on native ecosystems and economic sectors are well-documented. From watershed degradation to loss of habitat for indigenous and endangered species, Hawai'i has already experienced the far-reaching and widespread damage that invasive species can cause.

Invasive species are an especially important issue for native cultures worldwide, including Native Hawaiians, who derive their cultural identity and physical wellbeing through intimate relationships with native biota. For these peoples, cultural perpetuation is directly dependent on sustained access to native species. Invasive species contribute to the degradation of native cultures by accelerating the loss and/or displacement of the native species that they have developed around, thereby creating discontinuity between indigenous peoples and their native environment. When invasive species diminish access to culturally significant native species, members of the cultural community are significantly challenged in their ability to retain or revive their ancestral connections and traditions, and to meaningfully pass on cultural understandings and practices to the next generation.

OHA notes that immediate action is imperative to combating an invasive species. Once an invasive species is allowed to spread and become established, it is often not practical or economically feasible to eradicate and restore the ecosystem to a pristine state. In some cases, it becomes excessively difficult, if not impossible, to even control or manage the invasive species. Additionally, control and management strategies are not always economical or environmentally sound. The goal of eradicating an invasive species is most attainable when the species is detected early and contained.

OHA can directly speak to the difficulty and expense of managing established invasive species through the work it has conducted on its own properties. At Wao Kele o Puna on Hawai'i Island, OHA has carried out strategic invasive species removal actions for the last several years, targeting noxious species such as albizia and miconia before they can become established in the forest. Other established species, such as strawberry guava, can already be found in areas throughout the entire 26,000-acre parcel. Wao Kele o Puna is the largest remaining tract of lowland, mesic rainforest in Hawai'i and invasive species can be found even in its most pristine areas. On OHA's agricultural lands at Kūkaniloko, Wahiawā, O'ahu, OHA has begun to clear the invasive trees and grasses that have taken over the prior pineapple fields. At 511 acres, the removal of these invasive species by machine could cost over \$1 million.

This measure provides the state with a critical mechanism to contain and meaningfully address future invasive species introductions at the earliest stage possible, and avoid or mitigate the substantial damage such species may cause to our native ecosystems, agriculture, economy, and culture.

Accordingly, OHA urges the Committees to **PASS** SB636. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 9, 2017 3:19 PM
To: WTL Testimony
Cc: mrs_howl@excite.com
Subject: Submitted testimony for SB636 on Feb 10, 2017 14:45PM

LATE

SB636

Submitted on: 2/9/2017

Testimony for WTL/AEN on Feb 10, 2017 14:45PM in Conference Room 224

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Pamela Miedtke-Wolf	Save An Animal	Oppose	No

Comments: Please oppose this bill. This is a misleading bill. What is determined as an invasive species, and actions to be done, needs to be determined by everyone, not just rash decisions made by a couple people and the Governor. Protecting the lives and rights of all need to be considered, always, before any major actions or fundings are allocated. Protecting native species is very important, but not without considering all sides of the action...

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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