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GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



SUZANNE D. CASE
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COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

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CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
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LAND
STATE PARKS

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Tuesday, January 30, 2018
9:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 329

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1762
RELATING TO HEALTH

House Bill 1762 proposes to appropriate funds to the Department of Health (DOH) for the prevention and eradication of rat lungworm disease. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Supplemental Budget request.**

The Department is a collaborator on biosecurity issues with DOH, as described in the Hawaii Interagency Biosecurity Plan. Rat lungworm disease is recognized in the Biosecurity Plan as a serious threat to human health and agriculture in Hawaii, vectored by invasive snails and rodents. While the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC), which is administered by the Department, has received funding requests from the University of Hawaii at Hilo to conduct research and education on this important issue, sufficient funding has not been available via HISC to support the broad level of education, research, and control activities needed to mitigate this threat.

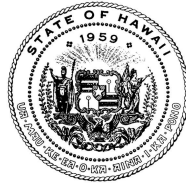
Providing funds to conduct education on rat lungworm disease, and increasing capacity at DOH to work on prevention and control issues, are recommended action items in the Hawaii Interagency Biosecurity Plan:

- Action item BorTifs1.5, relating to capacity at DOH for response to disease vectors, including those that vector rat lungworm
- Action item PosTifs1.5, relating to capacity at HDOA (Hawaii Department of Agriculture) or DOH for surveillance and monitoring of high-risk taxa, including vectors of rat lungworm

- Action item PwsPro1.7, recommending increased education and public awareness of human health issues relating to invasive species, including rat lungworm

Passing this measure would directly support implementation of the Hawaii Interagency Biosecurity Plan. The full Biosecurity Plan is available for review at <http://dlnr.hawaii.gov/hisc/plans/hibp/>.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Testimony COMMENTING on HB 1762
RELATING TO HEALTH

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN MIZUNO, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Hearing Date: January 30, 2018 Room Number: 329

1 **Fiscal Implications:** Appropriates funds to the Department of Health for the prevention and
2 eradication of rat lungworm disease

3 **Department Testimony:** We appreciate the Legislature's support of response actions by
4 allocating the 2-year funding from last session to the Department to conduct activities such as
5 surveillance and education and outreach to the community. Through collaborative efforts with
6 other state and county agencies as well as non-governmental organizations, we will continue to
7 address to these response activities and develop more targeted objectives for risk areas and
8 factors.

9 The Department acknowledges rat lungworm disease can be extremely debilitating with
10 lifelong affects, however, there are other vector-borne diseases that can affect hundreds of
11 individuals in a single outbreak and can be just as devastating. Should any one of these diseases
12 become endemic it would be a serious public health concern for our location population as well
13 as visitors.

14 We have also been working with the Governor's Task Force on Rat Lungworm Disease.
15 The Task Force has been reviewing and evaluating RLWD data across the state as well as
16 internationally. Their findings and recommendations are anxiously awaited to further guide the
17 state's response.

18 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Harry Kim
Mayor



Wil Okabe
Managing Director

Barbara J. Kossow
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i Office of the Mayor

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January 26, 2018

Rep. John M. Mizuno, Chair
House Committee on Health and Human Services
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 439
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Mizuno and Committee members:

**RE: HB1762, Rat Lungworm Disease – Relating to Health
Hearing: 01-30-18 – 9:30 am; House Conf. Rm. 329**

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of funding for activities aimed at the prevention and eradication of rat lungworm disease. Until those worthy goals have been achieved, a third aim could also be better treatment for those who fall victim to this illness.

The Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy at the University of Hawaii at Hilo established the Hawaii Island rat lungworm disease working group. It has been conducting research and educational outreach on the disease for the past four years, and it is my understanding that it has been doing very valuable work.

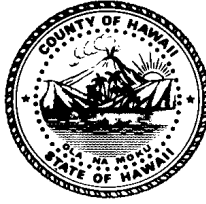
Apparently the impact of this disease has been different in Hawaii than on the mainland, with unusually severe consequences reported for Hawaii victims. Therefore, the funding of local research is uniquely important.

Please support HB 1762.

Respectfully submitted,


Harry Kim
Mayor

From the office of -
Council Member
District 3



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SUSAN L.K. LEE LOY

25 Aupuni Street, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

January 26, 2018

The Honorable John M. Mizuno, Chair; and
Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services

Dear Chair Mizuno and Committee Members,

I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support House Bill 1762, which will fund efforts to prevent and eradicate rat lungworm disease.

I support the intent of this bill, provided that the allocation of funds to the Department of Health does not negatively impact the ongoing work of the Hawai'i Island rat lungworm disease working group at the Daniel K. Inouye College of Pharmacy.

Last December, I and five of my colleagues on the Hawai'i County Council provided a combined \$16,500 in district contingency relief funds to assist Dr. Susan Jarvi's research on the parasite that causes rat lungworm disease, with a focus on the effectiveness of treatments to kill or remove the larvae from food crops. It is unusual move for County funds to fund a State research project, but the Council agreed that it was warranted given the urgent need to protect the health and safety of this island's residents and visitors.

Rat lungworm disease has the potential to cripple the agricultural industry in Hawai'i, and threatens the long term health of anyone living on catchment water systems. As with any other invasive species, it can easily be spread across the state, although it is most prevalent in East Hawai'i Island.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1762, and I ask for your approval.

Aloha Piha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sue Lee Loy".

Sue Lee Loy
Council Member, District 3



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January 30, 2018

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

TESTIMONY ON HB 1762
RELATING TO HEALTH

Room 329
9:30 AM

Aloha Chair Mizuno, Vice Chair Kobayashi, 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 interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawaii Farm Bureau supports HB 1762, which appropriates funds to DOH for the prevention and eradication of rat lungworm disease.

Providing safe and wholesome food is a priority for the Farm Bureau and its members. Unfortunately, not enough is currently known about Rat Lungworm Disease, or angiostrongyliasis, to fully protect the public. For example, although we know that people in Hawaii can get the disease by eating food contaminated by the larval stage of *A. cantonensis* worms found in raw or undercooked snails or slugs, and we know that people have also become infected by eating raw produce that contains a small infected snail or slug, or part of one, it is *not* known whether even just the slime left by infected snails and slugs is able to cause infection.

This is critical information since the disease can cause a rare type of meningitis (eosinophilic meningitis) that is extremely painful, debilitating, and can be deadly. Because there is no specific treatment for the disease, patients are only given supportive therapy and pain medication.

As more people are encouraged to grow their own food in backyard gardens, and school gardens are becoming more prevalent, the risk of being infected with this disease increases. Nutritionists advise the public to eat plenty of fresh leafy vegetables. However, without knowing enough about the transmission of rat lungworm disease, this advice may be risky in areas infested by snails and slugs, unless proper

preventative measures are taken. The public needs to know what pre-consumption measures will prevent transmission. Backyard gardeners and others who may not practice pest management to effectively control snails and slugs, or those who purchase greens from these sources, may be particularly at risk.

HFB supports funding of the Department of Health for the prevention and eradication of rat lungworm disease.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

HB-1762

Submitted on: 1/29/2018 12:37:05 PM

Testimony for HHS on 1/30/2018 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jeanne Kapela		Support	Yes

Comments:

The outbreak of rat lungworm disease that has spread throughout the islands must be brought under control. While the Hawai'i Department of Health calls rat lungworm a rare illness, it is difficult to discern exactly how many people get infected each year.

Symptoms can range from very mild—headaches, stiffness of the neck, nausea—to severe, even resulting in temporary paralysis or comas, and usually start one to three weeks after exposure and can last from two weeks to months.

The Big Island of Hawai'i has become ground zero for the outbreak. UH-Hilo College of Pharmacy professor Dr. Susan Jarvi, who's lab is home to the Hawaii Island Rat Lungworm Working Group, maintains a compendium of research that still needs to be done to better understand the disease, especially since Hawai'i County has seen more cases of the illness than any other part of the islands.

As a resident of the Kona community, I implore you to provide more funding for research into this illness, services for those who have been affected, awareness to prevent its further spread, and health programming to eradicate its existence from our shores.

RECEIVED
Date & Time
Jan 30, 2018, 6:57 am

HB-1762

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 5:58:42 AM

Testimony for HHS on 1/30/2018 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Teresa Parsons		Support	No

Comments: