

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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FIRST DEPUTY

JEFFREY T. PEARSON, P.E.
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

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BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
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FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on
WAYS AND MEANS**

**Friday, February 23, 2018
11:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211**

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2124
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

Senate Bill 2124 proposes to appropriate funds to the University of Hawaii, Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit, to support mitigation of little fire by the Hawaii Ant Lab. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this bill, 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 the University of Hawaii, as described in the Hawaii Interagency Biosecurity Plan. Little fire ant is recognized in the Biosecurity Plan as a serious threat to human health and agriculture in Hawaii, and is primarily managed by the Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) in collaboration with the Hawaii Ant Lab, a project of the University of Hawaii Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit. The Hawaii Ant Lab currently employs approximately six full-time equivalent positions that work statewide. In previous years, the Hawaii Ant Lab has relied on competitive awards from the Hawaii Invasive Species Council and funding from HDOA, though sufficient funding has not been available to meet the programmatic needs of the lab. In particular, the lab does not currently have capacity to meet the demand for outreach and assistance with little fire ant issues in West Hawaii.

Providing funds to provide stability to the Hawaii Ant Lab is described in Biosecurity Plan action item PosTifs1.11. 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.

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

DOUGLAS S. CHIN
Lt. Governor



State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

SCOTT E. ENRIGHT
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**FEBRUARY 23, 2018
11:00 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 211**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2124
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

Chairperson Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

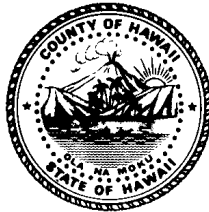
Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on Senate Bill No. 2124. This bill provides continued funding to the Hawaii Ant Lab project. The Department of Agriculture strongly supports this measure.

This project deals directly with education and eradication efforts, where possible, in order to contain and inhibit the movement of the Little Fire Ant into areas around the State where the invasive insect does not currently inhabit. This insect pest is so severe that it has greatly altered the way people and their animals interact with their outdoor environment. The good work of the Hawaii Ant Lab needs continued funding to preserve its efforts to achieve the goals of eradication, where possible, and containment and restriction of the ant pest within those areas that are overwhelmed by the insect. In those places where the ant is fully established, outreach to homeowners and householders on what their options are for managing the pest in and around their homes continues to be a goal of the Hawaii Ant Lab.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



County of Hawai'i
Council District 9 -
North and South Kohala



Phone: (808) 961-8564
(808) 887-2069

Email: tim.richards@hawaiicounty.gov

Chair: Committee on Agriculture,
Water & Energy

Vice Chair: Committee on
Environmental Management

HERBERT M. "TIM" RICHARDS, III
HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL
District 9
25 Aupuni Street, Ste. 1402, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

February 21, 2018

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Email: sendelacruz@capitol.hawaii.gov

Honorable Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

Email: senkeithagaran@capitol.hawaii.gov

RE: **Support of SB2124**

Hearing Date/Time: February 23, 2018 at 11:00 a.m.

Dear Senators:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit **testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of SB2124**, which appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Ant Lab for personnel and equipment state-wide and specifically for a full-time employee in West Hawai'i to support the mitigation of the Little Fire Ant (LFA).

The passing of and the implementation of this bill is critical to the livelihood of our residents and visitors alike as LFA is wreaking havoc in our agriculture and tourism industries – our island's biggest economic drivers, and I therefore strongly urge the enactment of SB2124.

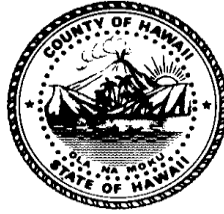
Please feel free to contact me should you need to discuss my position and knowledge of this matter further.

Sincerely,

TIM RICHARDS

Hawai'i County Council, District 9

Eileen O'Hara
Council Member
Council District 4



Phone: (808) 965-2712
Fax: (808) 961-8912
Email: eileen.ohara@hawaiicounty.gov

Chair: Environmental
Management Committee

Vice Chair: Planning Committee and
Agriculture, Water & Energy
Sustainability Committee

County of Hawaii

Hawaii County Council

25 Aupuni Street, Suite 1402 • Hilo, Hawaii 96720

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz
Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Hawaii State Senate

February 21, 2018

**Re: In Support of Senate Bill 2121, from Hawai'i County Council District 4
To be heard by WAM on 02-23-18 11:00AM in conference room 211**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Committee Members:

I'm writing to express my support of Senate Bill 2111, which appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Ant Lab for personnel and equipment to support mitigation of the Little Fire Ant.

Having lived in the District of Puna for decades, and now working as a representative for the people there, I am intimately familiar with the difficulties introduced by the presence of these ants. Residents can no longer enjoy their own lawns and yards without being subject to bites ranging from irritating to debilitating. Beloved pets have gone blind from being attacked by the ants. Finally, the agriculture industry has suffered financial losses due to the ants turning up in potted plants. I have personally observed the increasing number of LFA in Hawai'i.

Providing more funding to the Ant Lab to fight this little pest is a very important step towards preserving the peace and comfort of our unique island home. I do not hesitate to support any measure to reduce the population of the LFAs, or to prevent them from thriving elsewhere. Please consider the positive impacts that passing this bill will have on our environment and economy, and contact me if you have any questions about my support or knowledge of the subject.

Sincerely,

Eileen O'Hara
Council Member
Council District 4

Harry Kim
Mayor



Wil Okabe
Managing Director

Barbara J. Kossow
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i
Office of the Mayor

25 Aupuni Street, Suite 2603 • Hilo, Hawaii 96720 • (808) 961-8211 • Fax (808) 961-6553
KONA: 74-5044 Ane Keohokālole Hwy., Bldg C • Kailua-Kona, Hawaii 96740
(808) 323-4444 • Fax (808) 323-4440

February 21, 2018

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Committee on Ways and Means
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 211
Honolulu, HI 96813

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice-Chair
Committee on Ways and Means
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 211
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran and Committee Members:

Re: SB 2124 Relating to Little Fire Ants
Hearing Date: 02/23/18 – 11:00 am; Conference Room 211


While I would defer to others as to how precious dollars should be allocated, I strongly endorse the investment of funds in combatting little fire ants (LFA), and therefore urge passage of SB 2124.

Little fire ants are a real menace, capable of causing great pain in humans and blindness in pets and horses. I am told that the Hawai'i Ant Lab helps with community groups whenever there is a request for assistance, and my staff has expressed much appreciation for HAL's research into control methods for LFA in Hawai'i.

When it comes to combatting LFA, I am not trying to tilt the scales for one organization versus another. I have supported HB 2046 which would fund the Department of Agriculture's efforts in its fight against little fire ants, and I will speak in favor of any other bill on the subject. My true hope is that this Legislature will earmark as many dollars as possible to defeat this terrible species, and that multiple worthy efforts, which may all be deserving of funding, will not be allowed to result in no action at all.

Please act in favor of combatting this horrible invader.

Respectfully submitted,


Harry Kim
Mayor, County of Hawai'i

SB-2124

Submitted on: 2/21/2018 2:53:28 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Carolyn Dillon	Testifying for Little Fire Ant HUI	Support	No

Comments:

Little Fire Ant HUI strongly supports SB2124. We are a citizen-led advocacy group based in West Hawaii raising awareness of the LFA threat and directing the public to the LFA resources available on island. Unfortunately all LFA resources are located in East Hawaii. For each outreach or training event Hawaii Ant Lab conducts here they expend a minimum of 4 hours driving time, a very inefficient use of their staff. At the same time, West Hawaii continues to become more infested. Capacity must be increased to meet the growing demand. Dedicated West Hawaii LFA personnel is critically needed. Funding for Hawaii Ant Lab staff is a logical next step to addressing the needs of the community and to managing the risk of spread up the island chain.

SB-2124

Submitted on: 2/22/2018 7:31:21 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nancy Redfeather	Testifying for Ka Ohana O Na Pua	Support	No

Comments:

The Hawai'i Ant Lab is on the front lines of research and application for the Little Fire Ant (LFA) for the State of Hawai'i. They are the experts, and we are very fortunate to have them working for our community here on Hawai'i Island, ground zero for LFA. Their ongoing research has been critical for the community knowing what to do to begin to control LFA. LFA is spreading rapidly across the island, and up into the forests. Funding this program is one of the most important things we can do in this session, along with SB2399, to begin to understand and act on this most dangerous invasive species.

SB-2124

Submitted on: 2/22/2018 8:40:30 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	Testifying for OCC Legislative Priorities Committee, Democratic Party of Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments:

SB-2124

Submitted on: 2/21/2018 2:31:16 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Una Greenaway	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please fund this very important position on Hawaii Island. We are a very large island, and we need extra help in the Ant Lab to control the spread of LFA. Remember, our state is one entity. If we can't control the ants on our island, they will eventually get to Oahu, and you all will have to deal with them. Let's slow them way down. Mahalo,

Una Greenaway

SB-2124

Submitted on: 2/21/2018 3:49:22 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Javier Mendez-Alvarez	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SB-2124

Submitted on: 2/21/2018 6:16:48 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SB-2124

Submitted on: 2/22/2018 7:56:48 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Andrea Pro	Testifying for Farmer and artist	Support	No

Comments:

For 23 years I've been growing coffee and macadamia nuts on my 5-acre farm in Holualoa, a prime area of the Kona Coffee belt. We have dealt with many pests that affect our crops over the years, but none has the potential to impact farming the way that fire ants will if we do not take every measure possible to get them under control. I was swarmed by fire ants while hiking down by the ocean a couple of years ago. It felt like my leg was being burned with a torch and I had itchy welts for a couple of weeks.

Can you imagine what it would be like to be out in the field all day long being swarmed and bitten while pruning, fertilizing, and picking coffee? This will be a serious health hazard to everyone working outdoors and we simply will not be able to get the work done.

Fire ants affect everyone in Kona, with overwhelming implications for our health and economy. One of my friends recently purchased a home in a residential neighborhood in Kona and while it was in escrow discovered that most of the cats in the neighborhood had been so bitten by fire ants that they were blind. It takes about a year to get the ant populations under control once treatment starts, so rather than subject her cat to harm, she canceled the purchase.

It is essential that the Hawai'i State Legislature take this threat seriously and implement all measures recommended by invasive species expert. Please provide funding for the Hawaii Ant Lab staff.

SB-2124

Submitted on: 2/22/2018 9:06:02 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nathan Yuen	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz and Vice-Chair Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran:

I support SB2124 which appropriates funding to combat the little fire ant.

The little fire ant is a terribly invasive ant with a powerful stinging bite. Hawaii will no longer be a tourism destination if little fire ants spread across our islands. We need a sustained effort to wipe them out before they have a chance to reproduce and spread.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important measure. I strongly support SB2124 and urge you to fund this measure.

Sincerely,
Nathan Yuen

SB-2124

Submitted on: 2/22/2018 10:26:20 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/23/2018 11:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Shannon Rudolph	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Support