

Testimony of the Pest Control Board

**Before the
Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health
Thursday, February 20, 2020
10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 229**

**On the following measure:
S.B. 2474, S.D. 1, RELATING TO LITTLE FIRE ANTS**

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Chair Baker and Members of the Committee:

My name is Lei Ana Green, and I am the Executive Officer of the Pest Control Board (Board). The Board supports this bill.

The purposes of this bill are to: (1) authorize the Department of Agriculture (DOA) to identify best practices for the treatment of little fire ants in conjunction with Hawaii Ant Lab; (2) require the DOA to post on its website best practices for the treatment of little fire ants; and (3) allow the Board to revoke, suspend, or refuse to renew any license for violation of any best practice identified by the DOA.

S.D. 1 addresses the Board's concerns by allowing the DOA, in conjunction with the Hawaii Ant Lab, to establish best practices to address an everchanging and evolving invasive species without regulating the methodology through statutes and administrative rules.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

DAVID Y. IGE
Governor

JOSH GREEN
Lt. Governor



PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawaii
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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**TESTIMONY OF PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, CONSUMER PROTECTION,
AND HEALTH**

**FEBRUARY 20, 2020
10:00 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 229**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2474 SD1
RELATING TO LITTLE FIRE ANTS**

Chairperson Baker and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2474 SD1, Relating to Little Fire Ants. This bill authorizes the Hawaii Department of Agriculture to identify best practices for the treatment of Little Fire Ants (LFAs) in conjunction with the Hawaii Ant Lab and requires the Department to post these best practices on its website. It further allows the Pest Control Board to revoke, suspend, or refuse to renew any license for violation of any best practice identified by the Department. The Department supports the intent of this measure and offers comments.

Invasive species are a primary threat to Hawaii's agriculture and economy. The Little Fire Ant is a significant pest of Hawaii's natural resources, agriculture, economy, and to the health and lifestyle of Hawaii's residents and visitors. The Department is a funder and partner of the Hawaii Ant Lab, a project of the University of Hawaii Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit. The Department also works with the county invasive species committees on response to Little Fire Ants as necessary.



The SD1 represents agreed-upon language between the Department of Agriculture (DOA) and the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA), designed to avoid the inflexibility inherent in mandating a pest management practice in statute or rule, which was contemplated in previous version SB2474. Pest control technology changes, and insects can also evolve over time, and develop resistance to chemicals after repeated exposures. Care must be taken to ensure that the best management practices are able to evolve with any observed changes in Little Fire Ant populations in the State. The Department supports the revised language in the SD1, in as much as it does not mandate pest control operators adopt an inflexible approach for LFA control. The Department further notes that in regions where Little Fire Ant populations are already established (such as the Windward Coast of Hawaii Island), eradication of Little Fire Ants is no longer considered feasible. The Department instead aims to contain LFAs in regions with established populations and prevent their spread to other regions of the State. PCOs treating individuals' properties in those regions with established populations of Little Fire Ants may have only temporary efficacy, despite effective pest management practices by pest control operators.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Harry Kim
Mayor



Roy Takemoto
Managing Director

Barbara J. Kossow
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i Office of the Mayor

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February 18, 2020

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Health

Dear Chair Baker, Vice Chair Chang, and Committee Members:

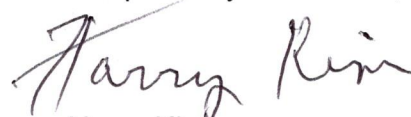
RE: SB 2474, SD1 Relating to Little Fire Ants

The little fire ant, to those who have experienced it, is a horrific species. It causes great pain in humans and has been reported to cause blindness in pets and horses. It has proliferated so widely that some have given up on eradication, and may even be ready to throw in the towel on control efforts. That is not acceptable. We must fight back, and that is why I appreciate the opportunity to testify on SB 2474, SD1.

I do not have the expertise to judge the most effective way to treat this menace, but it seems reasonable to have the DOA in conjunction with the Hawai'i Ant Lab working together to identify best practices, and to make those best practices known to a wide audience.

More broadly, whether you pass this bill or not, I ask that you please provide as much funding for an anti-LFA initiative as you can justify in your budget recommendations for the coming fiscal year. In that way, government efforts to control, and even eliminate, LFA from Hawai'i can be maximized. The threat is great and warrants your much-appreciated attention.

Respectfully Submitted,


Harry Kim
MAYOR

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2020 10:21:41 AM

Testimony for CPH on 2/20/2020 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cheryl K L Lewis	Testifying for Hawaii Pest Control Association	Support	Yes

Comments:

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2020 12:09:08 PM

Testimony for CPH on 2/20/2020 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

As a conservationists in Hawai'i for the past 30 years, I fully support SB2474 SD1. It standardizes control methods for the Little Fire Ant and ensures anyone appying pesticides is doing so using the most effective method approved by the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture.

Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2020 6:23:12 PM

Testimony for CPH on 2/20/2020 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Andrea Quinn	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

Please support SB2474. Fireworks not only are responsible for personal injuries such as blown off fingers, but they often are responsible for fires as well. Increasing permit fees will help decrease these issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my testimony.

Andrea Quinn

Kihei, Maui

LATE

SB-2474-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2020 10:34:39 AM

Testimony for CPH on 2/20/2020 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Franny Brewer	Individual	Comments	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I appreciate the intent and reasoning behind this bill - to ensure that consumers on the Big Island are getting the best value and impact for their dollar, in regard to treatment of little fire ants. However, I think that execution of this measure would be difficult, as there are many possible ways to effectively treat LFA (depending on the landscape) and HAL/HDOA would face a great deal of difficulty in trying to ensure that an updated, comprehensive list of all possible approaches was available at all times.

Additionally, in my experience (as someone who educates and works with communities on LFA control), I have found that licensed PCOs are for the most part doing their best to keep up with the advice and recommendations published by HAL, CTAHR, and other researchers. As a regulated industry, they have their licensing and reputation to protect, and are committed to ensuring they are providing an effective service.

Far more problematic are the many unlicensed businesses offering pest control services for LFA on the Big Island. Some of these are using the same HAL recommendations as the licensed folks, but many are using questionable practices and in some cases mis-using pesticides - against label requirements! - entirely. However, this law would not apply to these groups as they are already operating illegally.

I am concerned that creating potential legal stickiness for PCOs may influence them to discontinue offering LFA services altogether, which would leave only the unlicensed organizations available to the many residents of the Big Island who need LFA control. Currently, I advise any community member seeking a LFA treatment provider to use a licensed PCO. I have personally communicated with about a half dozen major PCOs on the island that treat for LFA, and have been satisfied that their methods are within the current "guidelines" as provided by HAL.

As I continue to see irresponsible pesticide use by individuals and unregulated businesses for LFA control, I support efforts to improve the situation and applaud the legislators who are trying to solve this problem. I am just not sure this measure will address that problem fully, and worry that it could create unintended negative consequences.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments!