

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 AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**FEBRUARY 10, 2020
2:20 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2957
RELATING TO THE PESTICIDE SUBSIDY PROGRAM**

Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2957, relating to the pesticide subsidy program. This bill appropriates funds from the general fund to the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture for fiscal year 2020-2021 to assist in the eradication of the coffee berry borer through the pesticide subsidy program established under Act 105, Session Laws of Hawaii 2014, as amended. The funds are to be deposited in the pesticide use revolving fund established pursuant to section 149A-13.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes. The Department supports this measure insofar as it can be reconciled with SB2623, which seeks comparable objectives, and offers the following comments.

Invasive species are a primary threat to Hawai'i's agriculture and economy. The coffee berry borer is a significant coffee pest in Hawai'i and the world. The funding of the program will allow the Department to continue to support coffee farmers in their efforts to address this threat for fiscal year 2020-2021.

The Department notes that Senate bill 2623, which also seeks to fund the coffee berry borer subsidy program, is more comprehensive in extending the life of the program and provides funding for a manager position. The Department prefers SB2623



over SB2957 for those additional beneficial features. Also, we would like to clarify that the purpose of the subsidy program is to manage and suppress coffee berry borer populations, not eradicate them as indicated in this bill. Eradication is not considered a feasible option at this point. Lastly, the subsidy program is currently administered by the Plant Pest Control Branch (PPC), whereas the pesticide revolving fund is administered by the Pesticide Branch, so it may be more appropriate to allocate the funding to the operational budget for PPC, namely AGR 122.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

SB-2957

Submitted on: 2/7/2020 5:40:21 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2020 2:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
HERBERT M. "TIM" RICHARDS, III	Testifying for Hawaii County Council	Support	No

Comments:

SB-2957

Submitted on: 2/7/2020 4:02:32 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2020 2:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Colehour Bondera	Testifying for Kona Coffee Farmers Association	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members:

Please accept this testimony in full support of this piece of legislation.

As a coffee farmer, a second generation farmer, and the current President of the Board of Directors of the farmer-only non-profit organization, my purpose is to emphasize the fact that coffee farmers need the support from the state in order to maintain the pest control of CBB that was brought into the state (HI was the last coffee producing part of the world without CBB).

We can educate each other and work together and try to work with our neighbors, and at the end of the day we still need to spend money to put extra effort to control the CBB, and the only common agreement on how and where that should happen is applications of the fungus *Beauveria bassiana* as needed.

Please continue providing this basic need for coffee farmers through sharing the costs to keep control and please extend this program to continue to help coffee farmers survive!

Sincerely,

Colehour Bondera, President

Kona Coffee Farmers Association

SB-2957

Submitted on: 2/7/2020 5:14:37 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2020 2:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cynthia Maryanoff	Testifying for KCFA	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Representative,

SB2957

Please continue to help the small farmers of KONA fight the coffee borer beetle!

We, and every coffee farmer in Hawaii, can provide compelling evidence of the importance of extending and providing continued funding for the pesticide subsidy program to assist farmers in battling the damage threatening the future of coffee growing in Hawaii.

Please support SB2957.

On behalf of the more than 300 members of the **Kona Coffee Farmers Association**, we are submitting this written testimony **to please pass SB2957**. Our two Kona coffee farms [Honalo Farm; Cynthiana Farm] have annual infestations of coffee borer beetles. As fledgling farmers, we were shocked to realize how vulnerable our coffee crop was to beetle damage, **and how much work it was for each farm to battle this harmful pest**. Indeed, it is a lot of work for every coffee farmer to battle the beetle. Thus, we really appreciate your continued support of the current HDOA-administered subsidy program for Botanigard and Mycotrol, which are rather expensive pest-control materials. Without this governmental support, we (and other coffee farmers) could not maintain the economic viability of the coffee business. Having enough quality coffee at the end of the growing season is exceedingly important. The volcanic VOG was harmful for coffee as well so yields have been affected badly. For us, the investment to get started was huge and then to have to battle the beetle; it's been work, work, work, spend, spend, spend. **We thank you for the support thus far.**

The threat of Coffee Berry Borer (CBB) creates a risk that Hawaii-grown coffee will join sugar and pineapple as lost Hawaii-heritage agriculture crops. CBB is now present on three of our islands—Hawaii, Oahu and Maui.

The most effective way to reduce the damage caused by CBB is the application of the fungus *Beauveria bassiana*. The current HDOA-administered subsidy program for *Beauveria bassiana* is assisting farmers to develop effective integrated pest management (IPM) to mitigate CBB damage and to protect the economic viability of Hawaii-grown coffee. **The passage of SB2957 is a reasonable step toward continuing to save the coffee growing industry in Hawaii**, the sole center of commercial production in the USA.

Hawaii's coffee farmers ask for your support and ask that you please pass SB2957 We, as small farm owners/operators, request your continued support to mitigate this agricultural problem.

Mahalo in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Bruce and Cynthia Maryanoff

cmaryanoff@comcast.net

Co-CEOs, Absolute Palate LLC

7 February 2020

SB-2957

Submitted on: 2/8/2020 7:29:21 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2020 2:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Thomas RaysonMD	Testifying for Kona Coffee Farmers Association	Support	No

Comments:

In support of SB 2957

Dear Hawaii state senators

My name is Thomas Rayson and I am a new farmer in Kona And new board member of the Kona coffee farmers Association. I strongly urge you to support the CBB subsidy renewal an extension for us local farmers to combat this pest that is decimating our Kona coffee fields here on the big island. CBB is the number one expense in my farm as I have infestation rates that I've quite low in the early picking season and up to 80% at the end of the season. The only way to get the CBB out of my coffee beans is to sprayThe fungal agent botanigard. Although this is effective; it is also extremely expensive and the subsidy to reimburse for this chemical expense is quite prohibitive to make it any profit on my small 1 acre state coffee farm and larger farms as well. Other than the pickers this is the biggest expense we have and I strongly urge you to continue our subsidy program to help update the fees associated with this program until we have a better solution. I really appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Mahalo!

Thomas Rayson MD

82-5999 Coffee Pl

Captain Cook HI 96704

SB-2957

Submitted on: 2/8/2020 6:15:22 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2020 2:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Howard Stang	Testifying for KCFA	Support	No

Comments:

I support this bill. I own a small coffee farm in Holualoa, and without the Botanigard subsidy program, I would not be able to cover the costs for growing coffee on my farm. Without the subsidy program, I would be unable to continue growing coffee on my farm.

SB-2957

Submitted on: 2/9/2020 1:09:55 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2020 2:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Joan Obra	Testifying for Rusty's Hawaiian	Support	No

Comments:

Dear State Senators,

My name is Joan Obra, and I am writing in support of SB 2957 on behalf of Rusty's Hawaiian, my family's farm, mill and roastery in the Ka'u District of Hawai'i Island. There are several reasons why Hawaii's coffee farmers need the subsidy for commercial formulations of *Beauveria bassiana*:

1. *Beauveria bassiana* is a naturally occurring fungus that kills Coffee Berry Borer (CBB). It's available in both conventional and certified-organic formulations, which makes it suitable for farmers throughout the Hawaiian islands.
2. Indeed, *Beauveria bassiana* is so important that UH-CTAHR's Integrated Pest Management (IPM) system for coffee features it as a key tool in controlling CBB.
3. *Beauveria bassiana* is costly. One local retailer sells it for about \$200 per gallon. Previously, a USDA TASC grant helped Hawaii coffee farmers offset its high cost. Now that this grant has ended, the State's subsidy is the only one available to farmers.
4. Without the State's subsidy, we believe farmers will reduce their use of this critical tool, which could result in significant increases of the CBB population -- and corresponding damage to the State's coffee crop.

For all of these reasons, we at Rusty's Hawaiian support the continued State subsidy for *Beauveria bassiana*. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Joan Obra



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 10, 2020

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON SB 2957
RELATING TO THE PESTICIDE SUBSIDY PROGRAM
Room 224
1:15 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Ruderman, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawaii Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 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, with a comment, SB 2957, which appropriates moneys to DOA for the pesticide subsidy program. HFB prefers the language in SB 2623, which the AEN committee has already passed because it extends the program **AND** extends the program manager position.

Coffee is one of Hawaii's signature crops; one that helps bring fame and tourists to Hawaii. Coffee Berry Borer (CBB) threatens the entire Hawaiian coffee industry. While the full tally is yet to be made, farms on Hawaii Island have experienced deep losses. Some have failed. Moreover, large quantities of coffee have been downgraded due to insect damage, reducing the value of the remaining crop. CBB is a serious threat to Hawaii's agriculture industry and the state's economy. While CBB is battled worldwide, no other coffee-growing origin shares Hawaii's high labor costs and restrictions on pesticides that may be used elsewhere to fight this destructive pest. This places the industry at a competitive disadvantage when compared to the rest of the coffee-growing world.

Fighting CBB is a priority in other coffee-producing countries. The USDA has expressed its support targeted toward research, education, and mitigation. The industry's response has been immediate and multi-faceted. A non-profit CBB task force has been formed, including growers, processors, HDOA, UH, USDA and county government. CTAHR and HDOA have been responsive and effective in their combined efforts. The industry has committed countless private-sector dollars and has leveraged both State and Federal funds. The State must continue to do its part.

A recent CTAHR economic analysis estimates FY2013 crop losses due to CBB at \$7.68 million, with a resultant \$571,000 annual loss in state tax revenues. The extension of the CBB Pesticide Subsidy Program should be viewed as a modest investment in one of the state's largest and most important agricultural industries.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important subject.

SB-2957

Submitted on: 2/9/2020 2:44:42 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2020 2:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Suzanne Shriner	Testifying for Lions Gate Farns	Support	No

Comments:

SB-2957

Submitted on: 2/9/2020 4:57:15 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2020 2:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Allendale Quijano	Testifying for Kona Coffee Farmers Association	Support	No

Comments:

SB-2957

Submitted on: 2/9/2020 9:43:58 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2020 2:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mark Shultise	Testifying for LavaRock Farm	Support	No

Comments:

I support the bill.

Please pass it so we farmers will have some relief fom costs.

SB-2957

Submitted on: 2/9/2020 7:22:12 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2020 2:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Thomas Butler	Testifying for KCFA	Support	No

Comments:

To the Hawaii State Senate,

Please continue to help the local farmers. It is a labor intensive business and it is hard to make it pay in dollars. However, the industry is important to the economy of the State and we farmers appreciate your continued support.

Yours truly,

Tom Butler

Paradise Found Hawaii Estate coffee

SB-2957

Submitted on: 2/7/2020 4:26:29 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2020 2:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
bruce corker	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Chair Gabbard and Committee Members:

As an Hawaii coffee farmer, **I strongly support SB2957** to continue the funding of the Beauveria bassiana subsidy program to combat Coffee Berry Borer (CBB) in Hawaii. CBB threatens the economic future of coffee production in our state. The subsidy program needs to be extended as the state and coffee growers develop systems to address CBB.

Please support Hawaii farmers and enact SB2957.

Bruce Corker, Rancho Aloha, Holualoa, Hawaii County

SB-2957

Submitted on: 2/7/2020 4:39:50 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2020 2:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tom Leonard	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SB-2957

Submitted on: 2/7/2020 5:20:39 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2020 2:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Bruce Maryanoff	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Dear Representative:

Please ensure **SB2957 FUNDING OF CBB SUBSIDY.**

We, and every coffee farmer in Hawaii, can provide compelling evidence of the importance of extending and providing continued funding for the pesticide subsidy program to assist farmers in battling the damage threatening the future of coffee growing in Hawaii.

We are submitting this written testimony **to please pass SB2957.** Our two Kona coffee farms [Honalo Farm; Cynthiana Farm] have annual infestations of coffee borer beetles. As fledgling farmers, we were shocked to realize how vulnerable our coffee crop was to beetle damage, **and how much work it was for each farm to battle this harmful pest.** Indeed, it is a lot of work for every coffee farmer to battle the beetle. Thus, we really appreciate your continued support of the current HDOA-administered subsidy program for Botanigard and Mycotrol, which are rather expensive pest-control materials. **Our farms produce cherry that are now at less than 3% CBB infestation!** Without this governmental support, we (and other coffee farmers) could not maintain the economic viability of the coffee business. Having enough quality coffee at the end of the growing season is exceedingly important. The volcanic VOG was harmful for coffee as well so yields have been affected badly. For us, the investment to get started was huge and then to have to battle the beetle; it's been work, work, work, spend, spend, spend. **thank you for the support thus far.**

The threat of Coffee Berry Borer (CBB) creates a risk that Hawaii-grown coffee will join sugar and pineapple as lost Hawaii-heritage agriculture crops. CBB is now present on three of our islands—Hawaii, Oahu and Maui.

The most effective way to reduce the damage caused by CBB is the application of the fungus *Beauveria bassiana*. The current HDOA-administered subsidy program for *Beauveria bassiana* is assisting farmers to develop effective integrated pest management (IPM) to mitigate CBB damage and to protect the economic viability of Hawaii-grown coffee. **Passage of SB2957 is a reasonable step toward continuing to save the coffee growing industry in Hawaii**, the sole center of commercial production in the USA.

Hawaii's coffee farmers ask for your support and ask that you please pass SB2957 We, as small farm owners/operators, request your continued support to mitigate this agricultural problem.

Mahalo in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

Bruce and Cynthia Maryanoff

cmaryanoff@comcast.net

Co-CEOs, Absolute Palate LLC

7 Feb 2020

SB-2957

Submitted on: 2/8/2020 10:49:20 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2020 2:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rynette Keen	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

When will you people learn that pesticide usage in our state is killing our people? You need to put an end to all this pesticide use on the state and county level. It also appears that this bill is directed for the benefit of business in the coffee industry and not the public in general. The use of public funding in this manner is intolerable. I oppose this measure.

SB-2957

Submitted on: 2/8/2020 12:33:57 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2020 2:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Marcia Nora	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

As a farmer in Kona this support from the state has been essential. Please pass this bill.

aloha.....Marcia Nora

SB-2957

Submitted on: 2/9/2020 2:29:31 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2020 2:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jacqueline Wikum	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SB-2957

Submitted on: 2/9/2020 8:20:59 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2020 2:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Janelle Gomes	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am a small 100% Kona Coffee Farmer and I am in support of SB2957 for the following reasons

#1 the subsidy program helps me to afford to keep the CBB under control. Without that money I could not afford it!

#2 Hawaii is an expensive state to live in...and raise a family in...being a small farm owner is tough...lots of expenses...the subsidies help so I can afford to take care of the farm needs and opens up money to take care of my family.

SB-2957

Submitted on: 2/10/2020 11:38:42 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2020 2:20:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Susan Dursin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Please support SB2957, continuation of the pesticide subsidy program.

As a coffee farmer, I can speak to the great success of this program. The amount of CBB damage in our orchard has decreased significantly, At one point about five years ago, we were discouraged enough by the amount of damage that we were considering abandoning our coffee efforts. Then we began using Botanigard and have had a decrease in insect damage each year.

The program has been well-administered with opportunity for research accompanying what is an obvious benefit to small farmers. It has helped to protect our orchard from the intrusion of insects from fertile coffee on neighboring properties.

Thank you for accepting my testimony. I urge your support.

Susan Dursin, Captain Cook

SB-2957

Submitted on: 2/10/2020 1:26:11 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2020 2:20:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Carolyn Witcover	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support the legislation because the pesticide is expensive and without a subsidy, I would spray less often which would in turn lessen my yield and income. The problem seems to be getting better than 5 years ago so now, in particular, would be a tough time to withdraw the support.

Mahalo

Carolyn Witcover