

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on
FINANCE**

**Thursday, February 25, 2021
11:00 AM**

State Capitol, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 308

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 834, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO A BLACK CINDER CONE QUARRY SITE SURVEY**

House Bill 834, House Draft 1 proposes to require the Department of Land and Natural Resources, in collaboration with the County of Hawaii (County), to conduct site surveys to identify locations for black cinder cone quarries on the island of Hawaii, requires a report to the legislature, and makes a general fund appropriation of an unspecified amount. House Draft 1 of the measure incorporates an amendment the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) requested to the original version of the measure to narrow the scope of the surveys to be conducted. **The Department appreciates the amendment made in House Draft 1 and offers the following comments.**

The Department generally supports measures that facilitate economic recovery on Hawaii Island, but has some concerns with this bill to the extent it allows for state funds to be expended on surveys of private lands.

The general fund appropriation in the bill is currently blank. The Department recommends an appropriation of at least \$150,000 to cover staff time and the procurement of a geologist, mineralogist or other specialist as a consultant on the project.

Finally, the Department notes that applicants for licenses of quarry operations on state lands typically identify sites through their own research and expertise and then request that State to issue a lease for the site after applicant completes an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement for the proposed quarry operation at its expense.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

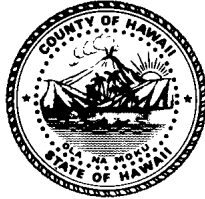
SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

ROBERT K. MASUDA
FIRST DEPUTY

M. KALEO MANUEL
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

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

Mitchell D. Roth
Mayor



Douglass S. Adams
Director

Dr. Sulma Gandhi
Deputy Director

County of Hawai'i

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

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LATE

HB834, HD 1

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Branco, and Members of the Committee on Water and Land,

The County of Hawai'i supports HB834, HD1. This bill will require the Department of Land and Natural Resources to survey sites for new black cinder cone quarries.

The County of Hawai'i's agricultural industries utilize black cinder as a media, amendment and as a décor for landscaping. We are fortunate to have this unique material. It is light in weight, aerates media, clean and decorative. Increasing demand is depleting the inventory of the existing public quarry and causing increasing economic hardship on the potted foliage and floral producers, who are major exporters of agricultural products. There are quarries on private lands, but they are not available for public sales.

Red cinder and a mix of red and black cinder has been researched as a suitable substitute. Unfortunately, it is not desirable substitute for black cinder. It is high in iron requiring remediation, heavy, and the fine particles have a undesirable texture similar to clay.

We are in an urgent situation. An Environmental Impact Statement would be required before the development of a new quarry. During this time, the black cinder inventory will continue to shrink and stress the industries that are dependent on it. Your consideration of this bill is greatly appreciated.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Douglass S. Adams".

Douglass S. Adams
Director, Research and Development



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Thursday, February 25, 2021 at 11:00 a.m.

By
Nicholas Comerford, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 834 HD1 – RELATING TO BLACK CINDER CONE QUARRY SITE SURVEY

Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen, and members of the House Committee on Finance:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 834 HD1 as it relates to the need for sources of black cinder cone for agriculture.

The floriculture industry is an important component of the Hawai'i agriculture industry. It is part of the “nursery, greenhouse, floriculture and sod” category found in the 2017 agricultural census by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agriculture Statistic Service. The value of that category in 2017 was \$100,381,000.

The cinder material is a critical component of the beds in which many commercial flowers can be grown. Experience has shown the advantage of using black cinder cone material over red, therefore the black is preferred.

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UHM/CTAHR) works closely with the flower industry, with particular reference to our plant breeding program. Since the 1950's UHM/CTAHR has been providing new varieties of anthuriums at the rate of approximately one per year. The cinder cone material is also used in container grown plants, as does the landscape industry.

For these reasons, and in support of this very important industry whose flower materials are renowned beyond the borders of Hawai'i, we support this bill.

However, we are aware of the current financial climate of the State of Hawai'i and realize that state funding is reduced. For this reason, UH defers to DLNR on their budgetary issues and priorities.



Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2021

LATE

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Rep. Sylvia Luke, Chair
Rep. Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 25, 2021 11:00 a.m.

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
Conference Room 308
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Support for HB834 HD1: RELATING TO A BLACK CINDER CONE QUARRY SITE SURVEY.

My name is Eric S. Tanouye and I am the President for the Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association (HFNA). HFNA is a statewide umbrella organization with approximately 300 members. Our membership is made up with breeders, hybridizers, propagators, growers, shippers, wholesalers, retailers, educators, and the allied industry, which supports our efforts in agriculture. The 2019 Hawaii Census of Horticulture show horticulture operations in Hawaii sold a total of \$89.2 million in floriculture, nursery and specialty crops.

This letter is to show **support** for site surveys to be undertaken to provide new cinder quarry sites that are much needed for our agriculture industry. It is important for industry to have reliable access to black cinder media, as it is used by a significant number of agriculture businesses and is required for the exporting of potted plants.

Without new access to a clean and reliable cinder source, our industry could face undue hardship of having no quality media available to produce our crops, impacting the future prospects of our industry. The previously



Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association

available sources of black cinder have been heavily used and no longer have quality black cinder.

There is also the issue of having nematode free cinder, which allows us to not have to steam the media (a costly process), so that our plants in turn can be nematode free.

If you have any questions at this time, I would be happy to discuss them and can be reached by phone at 808-959-3535 ext. 2627, cell 960-1433 and email eric@greenpointnursery.com.

Supporting Agriculture and Hawaii,

Eric S. Tanouye

President

Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association



LATE

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My name is Jon Tanouye and I am the current President of the Orchid Growers of Hawaii (OGOH).

OGOH would like to give our **support** for **HB834 HD1: RELATING TO A BLACK CINDER CONE QUARRY SITE SURVEY.**

We ask that you support this bill that will help to locate a new quarry site for cinder, as this will allow our growers to have access to clean, quality cinder that can be used to grow the orchids and floriculture for our industry.

This is a popular media for the growing of our plants and used throughout our industry. Without a reliable source, this could place our industry in jeopardy.

If you have any other questions you may contact me to discuss and I can be reached by phone at 808-959-3535 and email jon@greenpointnursery.com.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Tanouye
President
Orchid Growers of Hawaii (OGOH)



LATE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE
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**Support for HB834HD1: RELATING TO A BLACK CINDER CONE
QUARRY SITE SURVEY.**

Aloha,

My name is Thong Teng Neo and am the current President of the Hawaii Tropical Flower Council (HTFC). HTFC is a statewide association of commodity organizations, i.e.: anthurium, orchid, protea, tropic flowers and foliage, blooming and foliage plants. The Hawai'i Tropical Flower Council directs promotion and supports research of Hawaii's tropical flower industry. Each of the state's major flower commodity groups (anthuriums, orchids, proteas, tropic flowers and foliages, blooming and foliage plants) is represented on the council's board of directors. HTFC serves as a non-profit Hawaii Corporation to promote for its commodity groups and other producers of tropical horticulture grown in the State of Hawaii.

HTFC supports the search for a new quarry of cinder. An available source of quality media is an important resource for our industry to thrive.

HTFC ▪ P.O. Box 4400 ▪ Hilo, HI 96720 ▪ www.hawaitropicalflowercouncil.org

www.Hawaii's Flowers.com
Share the Aloha!



A new cinder pit will allow the industry to receive cinder media that is a vital part of the production of our crops. Growers understand the need to constantly look to the future and this is a material that is essential for the continuance of our industry.

Thank you for taking the time to read this correspondence and if you have any questions, I can be reached at neo@greenpointnursery.com or 808 959 3535 ext 2615.

Sincerely,

Thong Teng Neo
President
Hawaii Tropical Flower Council

Hawaii Export Nursery Association

P.O. Box 11120
Hilo, HI 96721
Tel (808) 969-2088
www.hena.org



February 10, 2021

Re: Bill HB834 Relating to a Black Cinder Cone Quarry Site Survey

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am providing written testimony for HB834, the bill relating to a black cinder cone quarry site survey. I am Dawn Kitagawa, the President of the Hawaii Export Nursery Association ("HENA"), which represents over 75 businesses - growers, wholesalers, and horticultural suppliers - in the Hawaii potted foliage, plant, and flower industries.

I am also President of Kohala Nursery, President of Big Island Plant & Foliage, and a shareholder in Kohala Kentia. Our nurseries grow foliage plants that are primarily exported to the Mainland but are also sold locally and exported to neighboring Hawaiian Islands. Governmental regulations, from both Hawaii and the Mainland, prohibit us from exporting product grown in soil. As a result, the entire export foliage industry uses black cinder as the main component in growing media.

According to the most recent USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service Summary, the 2018 value of Hawaii's horticultural and nursery product industry is estimated at \$84.3 million. Hawaiian plants have become well known throughout the United States and Canada as a premium product known for its quality and durability. Results discovered through numerous horticultural studies have shown Hawaiian black cinder provides better drainage and aeration to plants' roots than other traditional media, leading to a stronger, more durable plant. This is why HENA specifically markets and promotes Hawaiian black cinder, as it is a significant reason why Hawaiian plants are superior to those grown elsewhere. Furthermore, black cinder potting mix has become an unofficial trademark of Hawaiian plants, as it is the predominant method most consumers on the Mainland use to identify Hawaiian plants.

Over the past decade, it has become increasingly difficult for Big Island growers to obtain high quality cinder. Our primary source of cinder is close to depleting its current cinder pit. In addition, during the 2018 lava disaster, we were unable to obtain cinder from our existing source at all. Without a new source of quality black cinder, our foliage industry will become non-existent. Thus, it is imperative that we locate other sources of black cinder to ensure that our foliage, plant, and flower industries survive.

On behalf of the Hawaii Export Nursery Association, we respectfully request that you approve funding for HB834 to identify sources of black cinder.

Respectfully with Aloha,
Dawn Kitagawa

HENA President
(626) 818-4199

HB 834 Testimony of Gordon Inouye, Feb. 23, 2021

Member of the Board of Directors of Hawaii Floriculture and Nursery Association

President of Puna Flower Power, a cooperative

Dear Members of the 2021 Hawaii State Legislature,

I am writing today to submit my testimony in support of HB 834.

1. I am submitting this testimony because black cinder is a critical and primary media for the export floriculture industry here in Hawaii.
2. For many years the industry had access to nematode free cinder from Kapoho deposited during the 1960 eruption. Once that supply was exhausted, the industry has had to depend upon cinder from other sources which is infested with burrowing nematodes.
3. Nematodes are destructive pests which damage and reduce yields in field crops and may not be used for export crops to the mainland unless it is treated to remove nematodes.
4. In order to cleanse the cinder, the media must be treated a protocol which involves steaming the cinder for an extended period of time to kill the nematodes.
5. This protocol is time and energy consuming and raising the cost of black cinder substantially. In some cases it raises the cost of black cinder by 300%! One can clearly see that this is a major cost factor for our export industry as well as our field crop industry which depends upon good clean quality black cinder.
6. During the 2018-19 emergency period where access to black cinder was not accessible, the industry was allowed to mine an old cinder source which turned out to be free of destructive nematodes.
7. With this in mind, we do need to make every effort to identify such sources to support agriculture in general and the floriculture export industry in particular.
8. Once a comprehensive catalog of potential sources are identified, we can begin the dialogue of how to optimize the resources in accordance with Best Management Practices to insure that all concerns are being met.

With aloha!

Gordon Inouye