

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
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

**APRIL 7, 2021
10:30 AM
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 234, SENATE DRAFT 1
URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO EXPAND ITS QUARANTINE
FACILITIES OF THE PLANT QUARANTINE BRANCH.**

Chairperson Hashem and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Concurrent Resolution 234 urging the Department of Agriculture (“Department”) to expand its quarantine facilities of the Plant Quarantine Branch (“PQB”). The Department offers the following comments.

Existing regulations in the Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR) are designed to limit risk to existing plant-related agricultural industries by only housing and isolating limited amounts of imported restricted or potentially infected plants in quarantine. For example, coffee plants currently require a 1-year quarantine, provided that HAR §4-70-6 allows the Board of Agriculture to shorten or exempt the existing quarantine, provided and that the plants can be propagated and/or imported under procedures that can mitigate the risk of pest introductions with the associated materials. Particularly, limiting numbers of plants in quarantine and quarantine facility location are key processes to ensure proper phytosanitary measures.



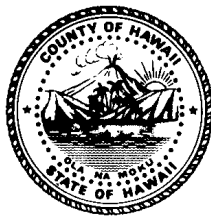
The recent detection of coffee leaf rust (“CLR”) in the State has shown that existing PQB quarantine facilities are unable to deal with industry-wide simultaneous demand for disease resistant stock. To determine the costs to increase quarantine capacity, particularly in areas affected by CLR such as Kona, will be difficult due to the availability of land to construct the facilities of appropriate scale. Currently PQB inspectors are stationed near ports of entry to conduct inspections on imported regulated commodities. Placement of the facilities away from the ports would require additional staff to maintain the facilities and could potentially place them in, or in close proximity to, the growing areas the quarantine facilities are designed to protect.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program has not been utilized by the Department in prior years due to the lack of need by the industry for use of the PQB facilities. The use of the quarantine facilities tends to be at about 30% on an annual basis and was not designed to deal with a rapidly spreading disease, such as CLR. Additionally, the program does not appear to be designed for funding of facilities designed for the general quarantine of plants.

In the long term, the Department believes that increased capacity to appropriately quarantine regulated plant materials will benefit growers by enhancing the Department’s ability to prevent the entry of invasive species. The Department appreciates the opportunity provided by this measure to increase its capabilities to protect the State from the threat of invasive species.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Holeka Goro Inaba
Council Member, District 8, N. Kona



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HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

County of Hawai'i
West Hawai'i Civic Center, Bldg. A
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy.
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740

April 5, 2021

Committee on Agriculture
Representative Mark J. Hashem, Chair
Representative Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair
Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 325
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: Testimony in support of SCR234 SD1, URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO EXPAND ITS QUARANTINE FACILITIES OF THE PLANT QUARANTINE BRANCH.
Videoconference Hearing: April 7, 2021 at 10:30 a.m

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of myself and the constituents of Council District 8 in North Kona, I would like to express support for the above referenced resolution, and submit a brief testimony as follows:

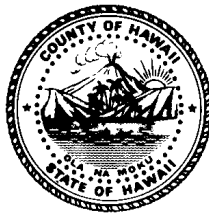
I would like to express support for SCR234 SD1 that would urge the Department of Agriculture to expand its quarantine facilities under the jurisdiction of the Plant Quarantine Branch and determine the cost of recommended quarantine facilities in the affected areas. This resolution would also urge the Department of Agriculture to apply for federal funding with USDA to expand its quarantine facilities to increase screening and enforcement abilities throughout the State.

I strongly urge the passing of SCR234 SD1.

Sincerely,

HOLEKA GORO INABA, Council Member
District 8, North Kona

REBECCA VILLEGAS
Council Member
District 7, Central Kona



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HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

*West Hawai'i Civic Center, Bldg. A
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy.
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740*

April 6, 2021

TESTIMONY OF REBECCA VILLEGAS
COUNCIL MEMBER, HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL
ON SCR234 SD1, RELATING TO URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO
EXPAND ITS QUARANTINE FACILITIES OF THE PLANT QUARANTINE BRANCH
Committee on Agriculture
Wednesday, April 7, 2021
10:30 a.m.
Conference Room 325 Via Videoconference

Aloha Chair Hashem, and Members of the Committee:

I thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SCR435 SD1, relating to United States Department of Agriculture; Plant Pest and Disease Management and Disaster Prevention Program; Hawaii Department of Agriculture; Plant Quarantine Branch; Coffee Leaf Rust. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Hawai'i County Council and Chair of the Climate Resilience and Natural Resources Committee.

The purpose of this measure is to expand the quarantine facilities of the Plant Quarantine Branch for invasive species so that newly detected threats may be immediately addressed. Being able to respond quickly to new threats often prevents the species from becoming firmly established. A prime example is the coqui frog epidemic. State agencies lack the resources and response mechanisms to deal with newly identified threats and may be missing prime opportunities to eliminate them. Delays allow invasive species to become established and make mitigation efforts more protracted and expensive. The State of Hawai'i has a special environment and we are fortunate that it is almost pristine. We have no natural protections to invasive species, and many threaten our environment habitats for our own indigenous species.

For the reasons stated above I urge the Committee on Agriculture to support this measure as well. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (808) 323-4267.

Mahalo for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Villegas".

Rebecca Villegas
Council Member, Hawai'i County Council

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Hawaii Coffee Association
PO Box 168, Kealahou, HI 96750

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

April 7, 2021

RE: Testimony in Support of SCR 234 SD1

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Perruso and members of the committee,

I am Chris Manfredi, President of Hawaii Coffee Association (HCA).

The Hawaii Coffee Association supports SCR 234 SD1.

The recent introduction of Coffee Leaf Rust and CBB in 2010 have shaken Hawaii's coffee industry to its core. It's important to note that coffee is Hawaii's second-highest value crop with incalculable impacts to the state's economy.

Managing CLR and CBB are expensive to the both the public and private sectors and serve to further erode Hawaii's competitiveness in the global marketplace.

Investment in quarantine facilities, or partnerships with private entities, will help Hawaii's farmers, coffee and otherwise, to avert the next invasive species disaster.

Please support Hawaii's agriculture by passing SCR234 SD1 and more broadly vote to improve funding Hawaii's Department of Agriculture.

Respectfully submitted.