

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

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

Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
FINANCE

Monday, February 28, 2022
12:30 PM

State Capitol, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 308

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1769, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO RAPID OHIA DEATH

House Bill 1769, House Draft 1 proposes to appropriate funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to study and combat Rapid Ohia Death (ROD) in the State. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget request.**

ROD continues to threaten ohia forests across the state. The Department is working closely with other agencies and university scientists to respond to this threat using the best science available. Researchers studying the two fungi associated with ROD have developed recommendations for managing the disease, but further study is needed to fully understand the complex relationships of the disease with introduced beetles, feral animals, storm events, and human activity.

While ROD has been found throughout Hawaii Island, the disease is limited in extent on the other islands. Regular aerial surveys are needed to detect new infestations so managers can quickly respond and contain the disease. On Hawaii Island, the disease is now found throughout most of the Island's forests, but forests where hooved animals have been removed have a much lower incidence. Removal of animals from areas that have already been fenced will help keep those forests healthy and limit ROD infections.

Public outreach is an important component of the multi-agency ROD response. Outreach specialists, working closely with scientists and managers, are educating the public on how to prevent the spread of ROD and why ohia is important.

A detailed, five-year response plan was developed in 2020 and is guiding activities to protect the state's ohia forests. The Department continues to lead this response through close coordination with its partners. State resources supporting the response are used to leverage federal and private funding.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

HB-1769-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2022 11:36:57 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2022 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Robert Hauff	DLNR	Support	Yes

Comments:

I am available for questions to DLNR. Please allow me Zoom access.

HB-1769-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2022 11:58:03 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2022 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Suzanne D. Case	DLNR	Support	Yes

Comments:

I am available for questions to DLNR. Please allow me Zoom access.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Monday, February 28, 2022 at 12:30 p.m.

By
Nicholas Comerford, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources
And
Michael Bruno, PhD
Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 1769 HD1 – RELATING TO RAPID OHIA DEATH

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

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of HB 1769 HD1 relating to rapid ohia death (ROD), which is a companion bill to SB 2765.

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa has a long and productive history collaborating with the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and the U.S. Forest Service. This cooperation and collaboration has extended to working to combat ROD. The University has a main component of the education/Extension task and has worked toward the objectives defined in the *Rapid Ohia Death Part 1: Strategic Response Plan*.

The University appreciates the budget and the expenditure plan, particularly in a difficult budget year. Since ohia is an iconic plant for the state of Hawai'i, and because it is the dominant tree throughout most of the state, its salvation benefits much of the Hawai'i ecosystem.

We strongly support HB 1769 HD1, but defer to the DLNR as to the ability to carry out the tasks with the proposed budget. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
P.O. BOX 150
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EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND
MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT (OFAM)

WRITTEN ONLY
TESTIMONY BY CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 1769, H.D. 1

February 28, 2022
12:30 p.m.
Room 308 and Videoconference

RELATING TO RAPID OHIA DEATH

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

House Bill No. 1769, H.D. 1, provides funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to study and combat rapid ohia death in the State and appropriates an unspecified amount of general funds for FY 23 to be expended by DLNR for this purpose.

B&F notes that, with respect to the general fund appropriation in this bill, the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act requires that states receiving Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) II funds and Governor's Emergency Education Relief II funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

Further, the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act requires that states receiving ARP ESSER funds must maintain state support for:

- Elementary and secondary education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for elementary and secondary education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19; and
- Higher education in FY 22 and FY 23 at least at the proportional level of the state's support for higher education relative to the state's overall spending, averaged over FYs 17, 18 and 19.

The U.S. Department of Education has issued rules governing how these maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements are to be administered. B&F will be working with the money committees of the Legislature to ensure that the State of Hawai'i complies with these ESSER MOE requirements.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



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February 28, 2022

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY ON HB 1769, HD1
RELATING TO RAPID OHIA DEATH

Conference Room 309 & Videoconference
12:30 PM

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice-Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 1769, HD1, which appropriates funds to the department of land and natural resources to study and combat rapid ohia death in the State.

Watersheds are the lifeblood of our communities. It is important not just to agriculture but to our social and environmental health. The spread of rapid ohia death has been alarming and its' management before spreading to other islands is very critical. Many of the other islands depend on surface water for their drinking and irrigation needs. Loss of trees will severely impact watersheds.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.



The House of Representatives
Committee on Finance
February 28, 2022
12:30 p.m. via Videoconference

Testimony in Support of HB 1769 HD1

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita, and Members of the Committee,

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) **is in support of HB 1769 HD1, Relating to Rapid ‘Ōhi‘a Death**. The aim of this measure is to provide funding for survey & response, applied research, reducing ungulates in fenced areas to protect ‘ōhi‘a lehua from damage and infection, and public outreach to address Rapid ‘Ōhi‘a Death (ROD).

The 2020-2024 ROD Strategic Response Plan details the accomplishments and information learned following funding of the initial strategy, and lays out the most important areas to invest time and resources. This bill reflects these priorities. Many partners in this multi-agency & NGO response continue to provide in-kind support for this effort, and many also bring additional funds to support the ROD response strategy.

ROD is one of the most challenging and heartbreaking issues that we have ever worked on. There has never been a successful eradication of a fungal disease in natural areas, and the focus must be on protecting the forests we have, and finding ways to perpetuate disease-resistant ‘ōhi‘a. In addition, we are losing large tracts of former ‘ōhi‘a-dominated forests to invasive weeds, and research from those areas shows that there are virtually no ‘ōhi‘a seedlings even though there are plenty of seeds in the seedbank. Managing this rapid conversion of native forest to weeds will need to be the focus of biological control programs and restoration work.

Mahalo for your consideration of this bill.

Aloha,
Christy Martin
CGAPS

HB-1769-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2022 5:49:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2022 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Douglas Perrine	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Rapid ohia death is a mortal threat to the most important tree in Hawaii's landscape. Please pass HB1769 to provide funds to study and counter this threat.

HB-1769-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2022 10:26:36 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2022 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
James B Friday	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice-chair Yamashita, and members of the House Committee on Finance,

I am writing in support of HB 1769 HD1 funding the measure at the original level of \$1,700,000. Rapid Ohia Death is a major threat to forests across our islands. We have made a lot of progress in learning how to manage the disease in the past eight years but funds are still needed to do research, monitor, manage, and get the word out about stopping the spread of ROD.

I am a professional forester by training and faculty at the UH Manoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources. My testimony here is my personal testimony and does not reflect official University positions.

I have been working on ROD since 2013, when we first were made aware of a new diseased killing ohia trees in Puna. In the years since then we have learned what causes the disease, where the disease has spread, and ways we can manage forests to protect them. Much more still needs to be done to be sure we don't lose our ohia forests.

The bill would fund surveys and management. Regular surveys, from helicopters or using remote sensing, followed up by on the ground sampling, are essential in finding new outbreaks of ROD. Small outbreaks can be controlled by felling infected trees. Regular surveys and prompt management will allow us to manage new outbreaks before they become widespread.

The bill would fund further research. We are investigating ways to use satellite images to detect ROD outbreaks, ways to repel the beetles that spread the disease from infected trees, and ways to treat wood so forest products don't spread ROD. We are learning about the role of feral ungulates in spreading the disease and how long the pathogens can exist in dead trees and in the soil. Every research question is aimed at providing information critical to management.

The bill would provide funds to remove hooved animals from fenced areas. We now have good evidence that feral animals lead to much higher rates of death from ROD in the forest. Investments in fencing are useless unless the animals are subsequently removed.

The bill would fund outreach and extension about Rapid Ohia Death. On Hawaii Island, where almost all of the ROD outbreaks have occurred, there are tens of thousands of small private forest landowners who need to know how to protect their forests from ROD. Forest users, such as

hunters, hikers, and nature lovers, also feel strongly about the ohia forest, and public actions affecting the public forests require public support.

HB 1769 would give us the support to protect our forests from this disease that has already killed over a million ohia trees. Thank you for your support.

Signed,

J. B. Friday, PhD

HB-1769-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2022 10:09:42 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2022 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita and committee members,

Let's keep the spread of Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death from further damaging our native forests and watersheds.

Sincerely,

Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.d.

HB-1769-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2022 1:39:09 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/28/2022 12:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Ryan Perroy	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Ryan Perroy and I am in favor of HB1769 HD1. I urge our legislators to vote for this bill, which includes provisions for additional fencing and ungulate removal in high priority areas, so far the only clear method we have to lessen the impacts of ROD on our native Ohia forests. Mahalo nui for your time.

Sincerely,

Ryan Perroy