

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 SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**APRIL 22, 2022**

**1:00 P.M.**

**CONFERENCE ROOM 225 & VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 92  
URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ASSIST COFFEE FARMERS IN  
PURCHASING ORGANIC FERTILIZER TO PREVENT COFFEE LEAF RUST**

Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Concurrent Resolution 92 urging the Department of Agriculture ("Department") to assist coffee farmers in purchasing organic fertilizer to prevent coffee leaf rust. The Department offers the following comments.

The Department appreciates the intent of this resolution and agrees tree health plays a part in resistance of plants to coffee leaf rust, however, the science behind fertilizers and amendments to prevent coffee leaf rust is unfounded. The Department believes support for coffee growers impacted by coffee leaf rust should be grounded in proven science and should focus on registered and labeled fungicides and the long-term identification and importation through legal means of coffee leaf rust resistant varieties. The Department recognizes the cost of fertilizer can be prohibitive. The Department would like to note there are multiple bills promoting composting including subsidies, which if passed, coffee growers can take advantage of without decreasing monies allocated for coffee leaf rust control.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.





**Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment**

Friday, April 22nd, 2022 1pm Conference Room 225

**Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: HCR92**

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara and Members of the Committee,

HAPA is in support of HCR92 which urges the Department of Agriculture to assist coffee farmers in purchasing organic fertilizer to prevent coffee leaf rust.

Tree health is a vital component in fighting the infestation and spread of coffee leaf rust. According to the Kona Coffee Farmers Association, the cost of fertilizer for the maintenance of coffee tree health is at least equal to the cost of fungicides used to control coffee leaf rust on organic farms.

The state currently subsidizes the purchase of pesticides to treat coffee rust, but doesn't provide organic solutions.

Sustaining coffee tree health reduces reliance on pesticides and fungicides to mitigate the impact of coffee leaf rust.

Please support HCR92. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Frederick', written in a cursive style.

Anne Frederick  
Executive Director

**HCR-92**

Submitted on: 4/20/2022 8:54:08 PM

Testimony for AEN on 4/22/2022 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Arwen Revere	Testifying for Wild Communities Foundation	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-chair Nishihara, and members of the committee,

My name is Arwen Revere and I am a high school student from Kailua and a member of the Wild Communities Foundation, whom I am representing today. The Wild Communities Foundation is in strong support of HCR 92, which urges the Department of Agriculture to assist coffee farmers in purchasing organic fertilizer to prevent coffee leaf rust. Coffee leaf rust is a serious matter that we believe should not be taken lightly. The disease was first discovered in Hawaii in 2020, and has caused billions of dollars in damage to farms in Central and South America since 2011. Research has shown that tree health plays a critical part in combating the spread of coffee leaf rust. The Kona Coffee Farmers Association says that the cost of fertilizer needed to care for coffee tree health is at least equivalent to the cost of fungicides utilized to control coffee leaf rust on organic farms. Currently, the state subsidizes the purchase of pesticides to treat coffee leaf rust but does not provide organic, natural solutions. We believe that supporting coffee tree health will reduce farmers' reliance on pesticides and fungicides that are needed to mitigate the impact of coffee leaf rust.

Thank you for hearing our testimony.

Arwen Revere on behalf of the Wild Communities Foundation