



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Finance
Friday, April 1, 2022 at 1:30 p.m.

By

Nicholas Comerford, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources

And

Michael Bruno, PhD
Provost

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 2907 SD1 – RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the intent for SB 2907 SD1 on classifying coffee leaf rust as an invasive species and directing funding for mitigation efforts.

As stated in SB 2907 SD1, coffee leaf rust is an important invasive fungal disease that has had significant deleterious effect on world-wide coffee production. Its introduction to Hawai'i has the potential to seriously hurt the Hawaiian coffee industry, and hence, damage the state's agricultural industry.

Combatting an infectious disease like leaf rust requires a combination of research to define additional methods of control, development of area-wide integrated pest management procedures that implement the research, and the funding to support these activities.

While the need that this bill expresses is real and needed, it does not provide specific funding to accomplish its goal. Therefore, we defer to the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council as to whether the current funding and diverse needs/responsibilities of the Council state-wide is conducive to meeting this requirement and whether classifying this as an invasive pest fits the Council's mode of action.

With that mind we support the intent of SB 2907 SD1.

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



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

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
FINANCE

Friday, April 1, 2022
1:30 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 308, Via Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2907, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Senate Bill 2907, Senate Draft 1 proposes to require the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) to classify coffee leaf rust as an invasive species in its administrative rules and to direct available funding for mitigation efforts, research, and prevention or control actions for coffee leaf rust. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) offers the following comments.**

HISC was established in 2003 by Chapter 194, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), and is administered under the Department. HISC is co-chaired by the chairs of the Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) and the Department and members include representatives from the Department of Transportation, Department of Health, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, and the University of Hawaii that provide policy level direction, coordination, and planning for the control and eradication of harmful invasive species infestations throughout the State and for preventing the introduction of other invasive species that may be potentially harmful. As part of their mandate, HISC disburses state funding to support interagency invasive species projects via an intra-governmental granting process wherein state, county, and federal offices may submit requests for funding and collaboratively draft a recommended budget for HISC review and final approval.

This measure calls for HISC to designate coffee leaf rust as an invasive species under its administrative rules, but HISC does not currently have administrative rules under Chapter 194, HRS. However, the Department recognizes that coffee leaf rust is a major agricultural threat in Hawai'i and additional coordination and resources are needed to manage its spread. As an example, the coordinated efforts of the Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death (ROD) Working Group have helped

our understanding of the fungal pathogens that cause ROD and minimized the spread across the State.

Similar actions to address coffee leaf rust have already been taken by HDOA, who is leading the response effort and listed the invasive plant pathogen, *Hemileia vastatrix*, the coffee leaf rust, under Chapter 69A, Hawaii Administrative Rules, as a pest for response and control under the authority of Section 141-3, HRS. HISC and the Department will continue to coordinate with HDOA as necessary on response efforts.

The Department is currently requesting an increase in recurring funds to be dedicated to HISC for the early detection, response, and control of invasive species like coffee leaf rust.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

SB-2907-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/31/2022 8:04:43 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/1/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chelsea Arnott	DLNR	Comments	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

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

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
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TESTIMONY OF PHYLLIS SHIMABUKURO-GEISER
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

APRIL 1, 2022
1:30 P.M.

CONFERENCE ROOM 308 & VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

SENATE BILL NO. 2907, SD1
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Chairperson Luke and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 2907, SD1. This bill requires the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) to classify coffee leaf rust (CLR) as an invasive species in its administrative rules and to direct available funding for mitigation efforts, research, and prevention or control actions for CLR. The Department supports the intent of this bill and offers comments.

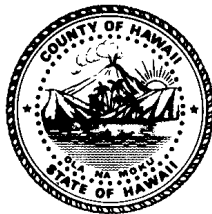
Although the HISC, through Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) §194-2(a), can promulgate administrative rules, the HISC has not engaged in active rulemaking to create a list of invasive species necessary to include CLR. The Department, however, already has the invasive plant pathogen, CLR, *Hemileia vastatrix*, listed under Hawaii Administrative Rules Chapter 4-69A as a pest for response and control under the authority of HRS §141-3. As such, the Department believes it has sufficient authority for CLR to act and respond in any capacity the Legislature so desires, in addition to the technical expertise needed. However, due to current budgetary limitations, the Department does not currently have the discretionary funds available to support



mitigatory efforts, research, and prevention or control actions for CLR other than maintaining the existing restrictions on importation of coffee into the State and to fund the pesticides subsidy program for Coffee Berry Borer and CLR. The Department has requested FY2023 funding for invasive species such as CLR control in the Executive Supplemental Budget, and the Department is as a member agency of HISC will continue to cooperate with all members of HISC.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

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

March 29, 2022

TESTIMONY OF REBECCA VILLEGAS COUNCIL MEMBER, HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL ON SB 2907 SD1, RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Committee on Finance
Friday, April 1, 2022 at 1:30 p.m.

Aloha Chair Luke and Members of the Committee:

I thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2907 SD1. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Hawai'i County Council and Chair of the Hawai'i County Council Climate Resilience and Natural Resource Management Committee.

The purpose of this Act is to require the Hawai'i invasive species council to classify coffee leaf rust as an invasive species in its administrative rules in order to utilize available funding for mitigation efforts, research, and prevention or control actions for coffee leaf rust.

The coffee leaf rust pathogen was discovered for the first time in the United States on the islands of Hawai'i and Maui. Coffee leaf rust causes severe defoliation that greatly reduces the photosynthetic capacity of the coffee plants. Long-term effects of coffee leaf rust may include dieback, which has a significant impact on the following year's yield and causes an estimated thirty per cent to eighty per cent loss if not properly treated. Efforts to control coffee leaf rust are critical to sustaining the coffee industry--which nets over \$54,300,000 in revenue annually--and the State must continue to support these efforts.

For the reasons stated above I urge the Committee on Finance 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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April 1, 2022

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY ON SB 2907, SD1
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Room 308 & Videoconference
1:30 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 SB 2907, SD1, which requires the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council to classify coffee leaf rust as an invasive species in its administrative rules and to direct available funding for mitigation efforts, research, and prevention or control actions for coffee leaf rust.

Invasive species have become one of the most devastating problems impacting Hawai'i. Many invasive species are damaging Hawai'i's environment and economy. Agriculture has a vested interest in this matter. Agriculture suffers when invasive species are introduced. Every year, numerous new pests are introduced into the State, such as the coqui frog, coffee berry borer, macadamia felted coccid, little fire ant, coconut rhinoceros beetle, small hive beetle, and varroa mite, to name a few.

A new threat, *Hemileia vasatrix* (coffee leaf rust), threatens the entire Hawai'ian coffee industry. Coffee Leaf Rust (CLR) is known to spread rapidly and leads to defoliation and tree death that can result in up to 70% loss of yield. CLR has already been identified on Hawai'i Island, Maui, and Oahu. CLR is the most destructive coffee disease in the world and can kill an entire farm in a matter of weeks. This fungus is a serious threat to Hawai'i's agriculture industry and the state's economy.

The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council plays a critical role in the protection of Hawai'i's environment and economy and the health and lifestyle of its people through the support of invasive species prevention, control, research, outreach, and planning. Coffee leaf rust should be classified as an invasive species in HISC's administrative rules to utilize available funding to protect Hawai'i's iconic coffee industry.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure of great importance.

SB-2907-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/30/2022 9:36:16 AM

Testimony for FIN on 4/1/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Kimo Falconer	Hawaii Coffee Growers Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Luke, Vice Chair Yamashita and the Finance Committee,

On behalf of the Hawaii Coffee Growers Association, we ask you to support adding coffee leaf rust to the invasive species catalog. This disease has had a devastating effect on many of our coffee regions in the short time since it was discovered in Hawaii. This will add another layer of assistance, in whatever form, to our ongoing fight to correct the effects of this terrible pest.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.