



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Friday, February 11, 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 2988 – RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara, and members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2988 which is similar to HB 1714, but different levels of detail.

The two-lined spittlebug is another challenge to the biosecurity of Hawai'i agriculture. The bill does a credible job of describing the problem and its potential effect. The spittlebug will continue to degrade Hawai'i Island pasture and affect livestock operations if a coherent integrated pest management program is not identified and extended to producers. This problem will require the combined efforts of the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA), the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (UHM/CTAHR), and the appropriate federal agencies on Hawai'i Island.

UHM/CTAHR is currently involved with spittlebug research and Extension efforts through an Extension Specialist on Hawai'i Island and a Professor of Entomology on the Mānoa campus. There is also a clear role for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Interregional Research Project No. 4 (IR-4) program, which could also be a source of federal funds. The IR-4 mission is to test the efficacy of pesticides and develop data to label the chemistry for specific uses.

SB 2988 budgets funds to combat this pest, and puts those funds and decision making authority in the hands of the HDOA. We strongly support this effort as UHM/CTAHR already works closely with HDOA on this and on other biosecurity issues.

We support SB 2988, but defer to the HDOA as to their priorities and availability of personnel to support this measure.

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

**FEBRUARY 11, 2022
1:30 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224 & VIDEO CONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2988
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

Chairperson Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2988, relating to the Department of Agriculture. The bill appropriates funds from general revenues for fiscal year 2022-2023 to be expended by the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture to mitigate and control the two-lined spittlebug, including but not limited to reducing the two-lined spittlebug population using insecticides, integrating weed management measures in affected rangelands, and reseeding pastures damaged by infestations. The bill also requires the Department to report on progress and potential legislation needed to the Legislature. The Department supports this measure provided it does not adversely impact the Department's priorities in the Executive Supplemental Budget.

Invasive species are a primary threat to Hawai'i's agriculture and economy. Funding for control of invasive species is critical to ensure that appropriate responses that mitigate negative impacts on agriculture, the environment, and the economy can be implemented and maintained effectively.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair

Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair

SB2988

RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Friday, February 11, 2022, 1:30 PM

VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

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

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **strongly supports SB2988** to Appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the control and mitigation of the two-lined spittlebug and for recovery efforts for lands damaged by the two-lined spittlebug. We appreciate that the legislature understands the implications of this invasive species and therefore appropriated funding toward this issue in the 2021 legislative session. Ranchers are awaiting access to those funds, but continue to deploy efforts to curb the spread of the Twolined Spittlebug, and further years of investment in control and research is necessary. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council has been holding consistent meetings to keep up to date on this issue and work towards finding solutions. This group includes NRCS, CTAHR researchers, HDOA, HISC, BIISC affected ranchers, and ranchers who are at threat. Outcomes include a website (www.tlsbhawaii.com), several informational videos, and outreach via webinars and conventions, and radio spots to raise awareness.

Both assistance to ranchers as well as continued research is needed to understand best practices for addressing the Twolined Spittlebug. We respectfully ask SB2988 also allow the Department of Agriculture to fund continued research in addition to recovery efforts.

We are aware that there are many pressing issues that need funding, but this invasive species directly affects food production. Hawaii Island is responsible for 80% of the state's cattle production, so an outbreak of this invasive species will be devastating not only to cattle ranchers, but to our endeavor for food security. This invasive species issue affects all of Hawaii, not just the cattle ranchers. Two-lined Spittlebug was first detected in Kailua-Kona, on the Big Island of Hawaii in September 2016 where it had caused damage to nearly 2,000 acres of pasture land. Monthly pasture surveys that began in in November 2017 have revealed that the pest has rapidly expanded its range and as of September 2021 infests 178,369 acres. It is imperative that we stop the spread of the Two-lined Spittlebug and assist ranchers affected in recovery efforts.

Two-lined Spittlebug infestations in Hawaii have been shown to dramatically reduce the forage quantity and quality of pastures by killing key forage species outright, or by decreasing the nutritional value, palatability, and productivity of key forages. This promotes the establishment and proliferation of invasive weeds with no economic or other value, while significantly reducing the quality of foraging grasses. Reseeding areas denuded by the Two-lined Spittlebug will protect from runoff and provide forage for cattle. Recovery efforts for ranches affected by Two-lined Spittlebug include brush



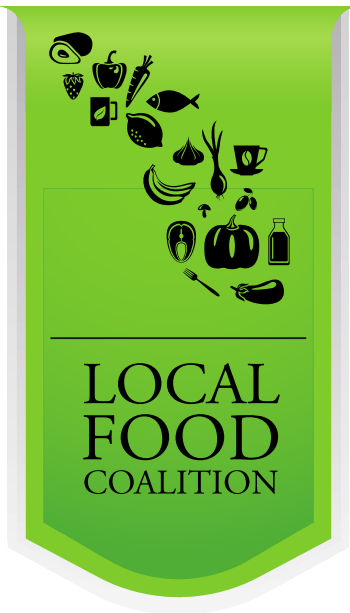
management, herbaceous weed treatment, range planting, forage and biomass planting, and fencing and prescribed grazing.

Healthy grazing lands are integral to watershed health and function in Hawaii. The Two-lined Spittlebug severely disturbs the Hawaiian grazing land plant community by killing the grass. This loss of living ground cover leaves the land vulnerable to soil loss which contributes to sediment-laden runoff into our near shore coastal waters, affecting coral reef health. Healthy coral reefs provide important services such as shoreline protection, marine ecosystem habitats that support important food chains that also help support our communities. Invasive weeds move in on these degraded lands, changing the entire character of the landscape hindering not only agriculture, but also other land management efforts, and recreational uses such as forest and wildlife conservation projects, hiking and hunting, not to mention the change to the aesthetic value of the land.

Ranchers in Hawaii are working hard to try to find cost-effective ways to adapt to this new challenge and to keep their lands healthy and productive, but the task is too big for them to take on alone. HDOA has provided funds for research efforts and we respectfully urge the legislature to provide them with funding to continue supporting this effort.

We **strongly support SB2988** for funds to be appropriated to aid in research and recovery from the damage from the Two-lined Spittlebug and preventing the spread of the invasive species.

Nicole Galase
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council
Managing Director



Hawai'i Aquaculture & Aquaponics Association
Hawai'i Cattlemen's Council
Hawai'i Farm Bureau Federation
Hawai'i Farmers' Union United
Hawai'i Food Industry Association
Hawai'i Food Manufacturers Association
Kohala Center
Land Use Research Foundation of Hawai'i
Maui Farm to School Network (Maui F2SN)
Ulupono Initiative
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources - University of Hawai'i at Manoa

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
February 11, 2022 – 1:30 p.m. – Via Videoconference

**RE: SB 2988- Relating to the Department of Agriculture –
In Support**

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

The Local Food Coalition **supports** SB 2988, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture (DOA) for the control and mitigation of the two-lined spittlebug and for recovery efforts for lands damaged by the two-lined spittlebug.

The two-lined spittlebug was first detected in Kailua-Kona, on the Big Island of Hawaii in September 2016, where it had caused damage nearly 2,000 acres of pasture land. As of September 2021, it has infested over 278 square miles or about 178,369 acres.

The two-lined spittlebug severely impacts the cattle industry as it kills the grass completely, providing conditions conducive to the growth of invasive species, weeds and lower forage quality grasses. While much has been done to address this issue, which included funding by the Legislature last session, more support and funding are needed to continue the efforts of the DOA and all stakeholders in mitigating and controlling the two-lined spittlebug population in the state. This effort should include assistance to ranchers as well as continued research to understand best practices for addressing the two-lined spittlebug. We need to continue to find ways to stop the spread of this invasive species to avoid a negative impact on local food production.

The Local Food Coalition is an organization comprising of farmers, ranchers, livestock producers, investors and other organizations working to provide Hawaii's food supply.

We respectfully request your support of SB 2988. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Kendall Matsuyoshi
808-544-8345
kmatsuyoshi@wik.com



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT
Friday, February 11, 2022 — 1:30 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports SB 2988, Relating to the Department of Agriculture.

Dear Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food; renewable energy and clean transportation; and better management of freshwater and waste.

Ulupono supports SB 2988, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the control and mitigation of the two-lined spittlebug and for recovery efforts for lands damaged by the two-lined spittlebug.

Ulupono supports the State's goal to increase local food production, which includes strengthening the local livestock industry. The two-lined spittlebug was first detected in Kailua-Kona on Hawai'i Island in September 2016 where it damaged roughly 2,000 acres of pastureland. As of October 2019, damage from infestation has skyrocketed to about 142,468 acres of rangelands on Hawai'i Island. In highly infested areas, there is 100% die-off of key pasture grasses such as Kikuyu and Pangola. Rapid spread and die-off due to this pest are affecting the local livestock industry and pose a massive threat to production on Hawai'i Island. Increasing State resources to support the local livestock industry will be crucial in maintaining the growth of local livestock production and meeting State food production goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

FEBRUARY 11, 2022

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON SB 2988
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:30 PM

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

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

The Hawaii Farm Bureau supports SB 2988, which appropriates funds to HDOA for the mitigation and control of the two-lined spittlebug and for recovery efforts for lands damaged by the invasive pest.

The Two-lined spittlebug was first detected in Kailua-Kona, on the Big Island of Hawaii in September 2016 where it had caused damage to nearly 2,000 acres of pasture land. Monthly pasture surveys that began in November 2017 have revealed that the pest has rapidly expanded its range and as of October of 2019 infests over 222 sq. miles or about 142,468 acres. We must stop the spread of the Two-lined Spittlebug and assist ranchers affected in recovery efforts.

Two-lined Spittlebug infestations in Hawaii have been shown to dramatically reduce the forage quantity and quality of pastures by killing key forage species outright, or by decreasing the nutritional value, palatability, and productivity of key forages. This promotes the establishment and proliferation of invasive weeds with no economic or other value, while significantly reducing the quality of foraging grasses. Reseeding areas denuded by the Two-lined Spittlebug will protect from runoff and provide forage for cattle.

Recovery efforts for ranches affected by Two-lined Spittlebug include brush management, herbaceous weed treatment, range planting, forage, and biomass planting, and fencing and prescribed grazing.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important subject.

SB-2988

Submitted on: 2/8/2022 2:33:38 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Keith	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

McCandless Ranch stongly supports HB2988. It is critical that funds continue to be appropriated to fight the TLSB.

SB-2988

Submitted on: 2/8/2022 3:02:42 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Alan Gottlieb	Testifying for Ponoholo Ranch Limited	Support	No

Comments:

Please support SB 2988

SB-2988

Submitted on: 2/8/2022 3:43:39 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Charles Chimera	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

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

I am writing in support of SB2988 to Appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for the control and mitigation of the two-lined spittlebug and for recovery efforts for lands damaged by the two-lined spittlebug.

As a resident of Honokaa, I regularly drive past cattle pastures along the Hamakua coast and on the way to Waimea and recognize the importance of a healthy and viable ranching industry as an important component of the Big Island’s agricultural economy.

As a former Maui resident and employee of Haleakala National Park, I also recognize that well managed ranchlands (such as Haleakala Ranch and Ulupalakua Ranch) adjacent to conservation lands and reserves can provide an important buffer against the establishment of invasive, woody weeds that impact native ecosystems. In addition, these ranches serve as natural fuel breaks, slowing or preventing the spread of wildfires into endangered plant and animal habitat.

The continued impacts of the TLSB will therefore have terrible consequences to both Hawaii’s economy and natural environment if they are not addressed now, while there is still time to minimize the negative effects and find solutions to mitigate their impacts.

I therefore strongly urge you to support SB2988 and provide HDOA and the ranching industry with the much-needed resources to continue to research and find solutions to this existential invasive pest.

Mahalo,

Chuck Chimera

Honokaa, Hawaii

SB-2988

Submitted on: 2/8/2022 4:42:06 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Jimmy Gomes	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support Hawai Cattlemen's Council tesitmony

SB-2988

Submitted on: 2/9/2022 12:47:19 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kimeona Kane	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

aloha,

Please support this DOA in their need to protect our communities, livelihoods and economy from these introduced spittlebugs. We know the impacts far too well of invasive species and we must do more to assist our good men and women of the DOA to help protect our precious resources and home.

Mahalo,

Kimeona Kane

Personal Testimony in SUPPORT of SB 2988
RELATING to TWO-LINED SPITTLEBUGS

by
Jenee S. Odani, DVM, DACVP

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
February 11, 2022
10:00 am; via Video Conference

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara, and members of the committee:

My name is Jenee Odani, and I am the Extension Veterinarian with the University of Hawaii at Manoa's College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources. I am grateful for the opportunity to provide personal testimony in **SUPPORT of SB 2988**. This testimony does not represent the position of the University of Hawaii nor CTAHR.

I know that this year brings with it many challenges for the State, including fiscal restrictions. However, I believe that the ongoing and growing threat posed by the Two-lined Spittlebug to Hawaii's lands and the ranchers that steward these lands warrants special consideration. Please appropriate funds to the Dept. of Agriculture for the control of the Two-lined Spittlebug and recovery of the rangelands damaged by the invasive pest.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

SB-2988

Submitted on: 2/9/2022 7:32:26 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Randy Cabral	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Strongly support



TESTIMONY OF JACOB D. TAVARES, LIVESTOCK OPERATIONS BUSINESS MANAGER,
PARKER RANCH, INC.
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
February 11, 2022 1:30 PM
VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

MEASURE: S.B. No. 2988

TITLE: RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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

Parker Ranch, Inc. strongly supports Senate Bill 2988 to appropriate funds to the Department of Agriculture for the control of the Two-lines Spittlebug (TLSB) and recovery of rangelands damaged by the invasive pest.

TLSB is one of the greatest threats to Hawaii's local beef production. The TLSB is already affecting more than 175,000 acres of land on the Big Island and is spreading rapidly. Fellow rancher's whose grazing lands have been impacted by this invasive species, are dramatically reducing their herd sizes, and thus revenue streams. The livestock business is very low margin to begin with, and in light of Covid-19, we risk losing more of our family ranchers if a solution to this pest is not discovered soon.

We at Parker Ranch are fortunate that the TLSB has not yet reached our grazing lands, however the potential impacts that it would have on our grazing operations are, quite frankly, terrifying. The University of Hawaii CTAHR, Hawaii Department of Agriculture, HISC, BIISC, affected ranchers, those of us who are at threat, and other stakeholders within the Hawaii conservation and livestock industries have been hard at work to develop a solution to this growing infestation. That being said, more resources are needed if our industry is to combat this challenge in a timely manner.

Beyond affecting the livestock industry, this pest will continue to impact other food security concerns, watershed lands, and the further spread of invasive weeds. Healthy grazing lands are integral to watershed health and function in Hawaii. The Two-lined Spittlebug severely disturbs the Hawaiian grazing land plant community by killing the grass. This loss of living ground cover leaves the land vulnerable to soil loss which contributes to sediment-laden runoff into our near shore coastal waters, affecting Hawaii's delicate ecosystems. Invasive weeds move in on these degraded lands, changing the entire character of the landscape hindering not only agriculture, but also other land management efforts.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Jacob D. Tavares

Parker Ranch
Manager, Livestock Business Operations

SB-2988

Submitted on: 2/9/2022 9:51:30 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Jimmy Greenwell	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of SB 2998. The Twolined Spiddlebug threat has only increased over time and the recovery challenges once the bug was decimated your rangeland remain largely unanswered. The testimony from the Hawaii Cattlemen's Council is spot-on. In addition to the cited benefits and contributions the beef industry represents, please also give proper weight and consideration to the substantial value of the eco-system services that flow from Hawaii's 750,000 acres of rangeland to the benefit of the broader community. These include the values attributable to well managed rangeland including its contribution to carbon sequestration, watershed and soil conservation, invasive species control, wildfire mitigation, habitat preservation, cultural heritage, and the preservation of scenic/open space. Natural resources require management and a healthy ranching/grazing industry is critical to providing those resources and bringing that valuable stewardship to Hawaii's rangelands. So long as the spiddlebug invasion remains at large, it continues to be a major threat to the health of our industry.

SB-2988

Submitted on: 2/9/2022 1:08:53 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/11/2022 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Kristin Mack Almasin	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support SB2988.

Thank you!

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



CRAIG K. HIRAI
DIRECTOR

GLORIA CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

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 SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
ON
SENATE BILL NO. 2988

February 11, 2022
1:30 p.m.
Room 224 and Videoconference

RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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

Senate Bill No. 2988 appropriates \$1,200,000 in general funds in FY 23 to the Department of Agriculture for mitigation and control of the two-lined spittlebug (TLSB), which includes reducing the TLSB population using insecticides, integrating weed management measures in affected rangelands, and re-seeding pastures damaged by infestations.

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.

Big Island Invasive Species Committee
23 E. Kawili St
Hilo Hi 96771
(808) 933-3340



February 9, 2022

Aloha members of the Committee,

BIISC would like to submit these comments on bill SB2988, which seeks to mitigate the impacts of the invasive Two-lined Spittlebug (TLSB).

As noted in the bill, although TLSB was only detected in 2016, it has destroyed more than 150,000 acres of prime pastureland on the Big Island since then. I have personally visited some of these pastures, and the severe landscape shift is nearly indescribable. Where there were previously lush green grasses, thorny weeds like blackberry and non-forage plants like pamakani now dominate. Ranchers have already had to decrease herd sizes in order to adjust to the loss in available forage, leading to a direct negative impact on their bottom line.

Additional to the direct impacts on ranchers, we see new potential challenges to conservation of our natural resources. Many ranches here abut the remaining high-elevation native forests and serve as a “buffer zone.” With the significant increase in weeds occurring just outside these native forest ranges, there is a great increase in propagule (seeds) that further increases the pressure by invasive plants encroaching on our watersheds and critical habitats.

BIISC has been involved with the outreach and response to TLSB, and we are very supportive of the research teams working on this issue. We do feel that environmental and economic impacts of this invasive species on our island and our state could grow increasingly worse with time, and that an early and quick response is critical.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments in this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me for more information.

Mahalo,

Franny Kinslow Brewer
Communications Director
fbrewer@hawaii.edu



February 9, 2022

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Comments in Support of SB 2988, Relating to Two-Lined Spittlebugs (Appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture [DOA] for the control and mitigation of the two-lined spittlebug and for recovery efforts for lands damaged by the invasive pest.)

Friday, February 11, 2022, 1:30 p.m., in Conference Room 224 and Video Conference

The Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF) is a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers, and utility companies. LURF's mission is to advocate for reasonable, rational, and equitable land use planning, legislation and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth and development, while safeguarding Hawaii's significant natural and cultural resources, and public health and safety.

LURF appreciates the opportunity to express its **support of SB 2988** and of the various agricultural stakeholder groups who defend the goals of viable agricultural operations and the conservation and protection of agriculture in Hawaii.

SB 2988. This bill proposes to appropriate funds for the DOA to mitigate and control infestations of two-lined spittlebug infestations and to undertake recovery efforts for lands damaged by the pest. The DOA shall take measures such as the use of insecticides, weed management, and reseeded pastures, to reduce the population of the two-lined spittlebug and assist in recovery efforts.

LURF's Position. Invasive species such as insects, disease-bearing organisms, snakes, weeds, and other pests pose the greatest threat to Hawaii's economy, agriculture, tourism, the natural environment, native species and to the health and lifestyle of Hawaii's people. Invasive species already cause millions of dollars in crop losses, the extinction of native species, the destruction of native wet, moist and dry land forests, and the spread of disease, but many more harmful pests, such as the two-lined spittlebug now threaten to infest and damage pasture lands, severely affecting and reducing the quality and quantity of forage pastures, thereby impairing livestock

ranching, which is a highly productive, expanding, and extremely valuable industry on all islands with an estimated current annual value of more than \$68 million. LURF understands that the pest has rapidly expanded its range, and as of September 2021 infests over 179,000 acres.

LURF members include property owners, farmers and ranchers who own, maintain, and engage in agricultural enterprises, and who consider efforts to protect and support agriculture significant to the continued conduct of their operations and to help sustain and preserve farming and ranching businesses into the future. The two-lined spittlebug threatens job and food security not only in the agricultural and ranching industries, but throughout the State, making it vital to address infestations and restrict further uncontrolled spread.

As potentially devastating threats to food safety and security continue to be a significant concern, LURF and its members appreciate measures being taken, including research efforts to assist agricultural stakeholders to manage and protect against this invasive pest.

For the above reasons, LURF **supports SB 2988** and respectfully urges your favorable consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding this matter.

Name: Frank Boteilho

Company: F Ranch LLC

Location: Hualalai Ranch, Kona Hawaii

Acres: 7, 0000

Number of years at Hualalai Ranch: 50 years, July 2022

Positions Held: employee, foreman, and manager (33 years), lessee since 2015

Testimony:

We developed, cleared, planted grasses and maintained 4,000 acres of highly productive Kikuyu pastures, and ran as high as 700 cow units until three years ago when the devastation of the Twolined Spittlebug started. Presently the herd count is at 400 head and declining each year. I feel three to four years of continued loss of grazing and explosion of weeds we will have to give up operation completely.

I am in support of Bills HB1714 and SB2988. The only solution to continue to exist is to plant Spittlebug resistant grasses, which have been tested here for 3 years with excellent results with the leadership of Mark Thorne, PHD Range Specialist. The need to continue weed control is also a top priority.

Mahalo,

Frank Boteilho

LARRY JEFTS FARMS, LLC
PO BOX 27
KUNIA, HAWAII 96759
(808) 688-2892

SB2988, Relating to the Department of Agriculture
Sen AEN Hearing – 1:30pm
Friday, February 11, 2022

Testimony By: Larry Jeffs
Position: Support

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Nishihara, and Members of the Sen AEN Committee:

I am Larry Jeffs, owner and operator of Larry Jeffs Farms, LLC. We have more than 42 years of Hawaii farm experience on Molokai and Oahu. Our family farms grow about 1 million pounds weekly of import replacement produce. I am a volunteer director, serving as Chair of the West Oahu Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). I have been an officer of the Hawaii Farm Bureau for many years.

Livestock ranching has an estimated annual value of \$68 million, with 142,000 beef cattle on more than 1,300 ranches---80% are raised on the Big Island. It's an industry striving to bring local food to Hawaii consumers.

Two-lined spittlebug damage results in entire pastures reduced to dust and replaced with weeds that cattle cannot eat. This damage causes runoff and affects the surrounding land and water. More importantly, it directly impacts food production and the replacement of imported beef.

We understand and appreciate the 2021 Session appropriations to address this issue. We also understand that the HDOA received funds from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to mitigate and control the two-lined spittlebug.

However, your continued support is needed to help ranchers mitigate and recover pasture lands. We strongly support the Hawaii Cattlemen Council's proposed amendment to describe the appropriations to include research to inform best practices and monitor the status of the two-lined spittlebug.

Your favorable consideration of SB2988 is appreciated. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.