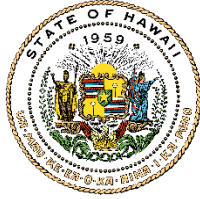


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
OFFICE OF THE CHAIRPERSON
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
FINANCE

Monday, February 27, 2023
10:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 308

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 1150, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

House Bill 1150, House Draft 1 proposes to appropriate funds to support the Hawai'i Ant Lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Department's Executive Budget request.**

The Little Fire Ant (LFA) is designated as one of the world's top 100 worst invasive species by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Hawai'i has no native ant species, making natural ecosystems particularly vulnerable to ant invasions. LFA continue to spread throughout the islands, reducing biological diversity and increasing operating costs for agriculture. The stings from LFA are painful and are a major human health risk. There has been an increase in LFA infestations across the State over the last year, especially on Maui, O'ahu and Kaua'i.

The Hawai'i Ant Lab (HAL) is a project of the Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit (PCSU) with the University of Hawai'i. HAL has a statewide mission to prevent the entry of invasive ants in Hawai'i and manage those already established. The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) is administered through the Department and provides policy level direction, coordination, and planning among state departments for the prevention, control, and eradication of harmful invasive species throughout the State. The HISC has prioritized funding to support the Hawai'i

DAWN N. S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

LAURA H. E. KAAKUA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - LAND

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

Ant Lab and partner agencies working to control invasive ants throughout the State through its yearly, competitive grant process.

In addition to supporting this measure, the Department encourages increased funding for biosecurity at ports and airports, and for early detection, to avoid the need for large eradication efforts and save the state funds in the long term.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

MORRIS M. ATTA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

FEBRUARY 27, 2023
10:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 308

HOUSE BILL NO. 1150 HD1
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Chairperson Yamashita and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 1150 HD1. The bill appropriates funds to the Hawaii Ant Lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the state. The little fire ant is one of the most devastating invasive species for Hawaii's unique natural resources and agricultural economy. Continuous funding of the Hawaii Ant Lab will secure management of this invasive pest and working on potential eradication tools in the future.

The Department supports this measure and appreciates the appropriation of \$550,000 for fiscal year 2023-2024 and the same sum for fiscal year 2024-2025 that are included in HB 1151 HD1.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



TESTIMONY OF
CASPER VANDERWOUDE
HAWAII ANT LAB, HILO

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

27 February 2023,
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
10:00 AM



**HOUSE BILL NO. 1150
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

Chair Kyle Yamashita, vice chair Lisa Kitagawa and esteemed members of the house Committee on Finance.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on House Bill 1150. This bill appropriates funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources [LNR402] for the purpose of funding the Hawaii Ant Lab to continue the statewide battle against the Little Fire Ant.

Hawaii Ant Lab is currently unfunded beyond the 2022-23 fiscal year. Until 2021 the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii received funds through the Hawaii Department of Agriculture for this purpose, however these funds are no longer available. For the 2022-23 fiscal year, the legislature made a one-time appropriation. The funds appropriated by this current bill will maintain Hawaii Ant Lab capacity at present levels for 2023-2025 budget years.

The staff at Hawaii Ant Lab work tirelessly with sister agencies to mitigate the impacts of Little Fire Ants by

- Preventing their movement between islands,
- Slowing their spread within islands,
- Providing advice, instruction and guidance for residents and affected industries,
- Developing better, safer and more effective treatment methodologies.
- Searching for solutions suitable for organic agriculture and pest control

Hawaii Ant Lab does this by working closely with other agencies with similar or overlapping mandates to contribute to the over-arching biosecurity strategy for Hawaii, deliver best-practice response and management of invasive ant incursions and developing better and safer control methodologies to industry and residents of the state. Over the past 14 years, the lab has been at the forefront of innovation, developing specific control products and application equipment for this species, tools to assist in early detection and prevention and broad networks of industry and resident stakeholders. The extension team do a fantastic job of training and guiding not only affected people from the agricultural industry but every day residents who are often frustrated by their inability to control this new pest.

I commend the committee for its diligence and careful management of state finances. I sincerely hope and respectfully request that the committee consider appropriating the funds as intended by this bill.



Casper Vanderwoude

Representatives of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of myself and the Hawaii Ant Lab.

I've been working for the Hawaii Ant Lab, doing research and field operations for the past 13 or so years. I've seen firsthand how people's lives are impacted by Little Fire Ants, their concern over the continued spread, and in the case of Big Island, the frustration over lack of public assistance. Working on the "front lines" of this situation, I am even more frustrated than the average person because we HAVE solutions, continue to develop and find MORE solutions, but we are surrounded by financial uncertainty year after year. On top of that, the need for mitigation efforts has exponentially increased over the past 3-4 years increases while our budget and staff remain the same and we are stretched to the limits. In fact, there have been 10 newly detected infestation on Oahu and 2 on Kauai in the past 6 months.

The Hawaii Ant Lab works closely and in partnership with all of the island invasive species committees and Hawaii Department of Agriculture to manage and eradicate LFA infestations as they are detected and when feasible (i.e. no eradication possible on Big Island and efforts are focused on management at high risk and significant locations). These partnerships are essential for slowing the spread of LFA throughout the state. But, please keep in mind that while we are partners in action, we are often competitors when seeking funding and that all of our partners have many other targets to work on. Hawaii Ant Lab is the ONLY organization solely dedicated to this issue and is a global hub for LFA research.

Little Fire Ants will continue to spread throughout the state but we have the knowledge, skills and abilities to dramatically slow the spread by providing essential public services like control and eradication efforts, educational and extension services on risk reduction and management, and research on improved control method options. When we know where the ants are at, we can and do take effective action.

This problem will not just "go away" and Hawaii is at a tipping point where the State must decide which direction this fight goes. I understand this bill is not for long-term sustainable funding for LFA work in Hawaii and only potentially helps the Hawaii Ant Lab through the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Even though long-term recurring and sustainable funding is necessary for success in this case, this appropriation will bide the Ant Lab and the State of Hawaii time to secure such funding. This appropriation will ensure the we are not only able to continue on as usual, but also allow us to meet the ever-growing needs throughout the state. Without it, our ability to respond to new LFA infestation will be limited at best.

Lastly, by funding the Hawaii Ant Lab through this appropriation bill, it frees up essential funding for our partners through the Hawaii Invasive Species Council's competitive grants. When we are all sufficiently funded, together we are able to provide the best services possible and make the greatest impact on the war against LFA and other invasive species.

Thank you for your time and if any of you would like to know more, I'm always happy to talk story and share my passion for this problem. Please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Mahalo Nui Loa

Michelle Montgomery
Researcher
Hawaii Ant Lab

HB-1150-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2023 3:17:05 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2023 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|--|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Douglass S. Adams | Department of Research and Development, County of Hawaii | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee on Finance:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong SUPPORT of HB 1150 HD1, which appropriates funds to support the Hawaii ant lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State. This funding is vital to the possibility of keeping Hawaii from being completely overrun by this dangerous invasive species. The County of Hawaii has provided funding to the Hawaii Ant Lab in the past and greatly appreciates the state's potential support.

We strongly encourage the Committee to move HB 1150 HD1 forward with a POSITIVE recommendation for House passage.

very respectfully

Douglass S Adams

Director, Dept of Research & Development

County of Hawaii

HB-1150-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2023 10:57:32 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2023 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Carol Kwan | Carol Kwan Consulting LLC | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support HB 1150. We need to give Hawaii Ant Lab as much funding as possible to aid in its efforts to identify and eradicate Little Fire Ant (LFA) on Oahu and the other Neighbor Islands where it isn't established yet. I am a Certified Arborist. While surveying trees for a construction project, I was stung by LFA on the back of my neck. I reported it to Oahu Invasive Species Committee (OISC), who reported it to Hawaii Ant Lab. Hawaii Ant Lab determined that it was LFA. The last I heard, they'd surveyed it as 15+ acres.

LFA is a horrible pest, something that the people of Hawaii don't want to live with. It has painful stings, can blind pets, and just makes life miserable. It could also possibly decimate our tourism industry if it gets established throughout our Islands. Since we weren't able to keep it out of Hawaii in the first place, we need to fund the ongoing battle of eradicating it wherever it gets introduced.

Mahalo,

Carol Kwan



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 27, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

TESTIMONY ON HB 1150, HD1
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, 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 1150, HD1, which appropriates funds to support the Hawai'i ant lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State.

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

HFB recognizes the harm that the little fire ant has caused to farms, businesses, and the quality of life of those affected by the pest. We agree the Hawai'i Ant Lab's operational funding is critical to ensure that continued measures to stop the spread of little fire ants are not reduced or disrupted.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



HB 1150 |
Little Fire
Ants

RESCUE OF ANIMAL RIGHTS

to
the HOUSE
Committees
FIN

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair & the FIN Committee,

ROAR testifies to provide comments for HB 1150.

The Hawaii State
Legislature

“Little Fire Ants” has the scientific name: *wasmannia auropunctata*. This particular ant species live in a social colony. One colony has several queens. All the workers are sterile daughters of a queen. Males are notably absent from day to day life and are produced seasonally for breeding purposes. Each ant has a specific task and most foraging ants (the ones we see) are the older workers assigned to a high risk task of finding food. A large portion of the colony stays out of sight. After mating, their purpose is served and they die. 15,000 different any species known to science, another 15,000 that has not been discovered yet. Ants are a vital component of most ecosystems on our planet.

from
Zhizi Xiong
(Angela
Melody
Young)
Creator

In Hawaii, the Little Fire Ant is seen as an invasive specie. What is an invasive species? Invasive species are simply species of plants & animals that, for one reason or another, have the ability to become the dominant organism in the enforcement, often to the detriment of other species. Usually these species come from other locations where they are not a problem, but outside of their natural environment, they become a problem. One theory for this is that normally checks & balances in natural environments evolve to keep everything in its place. Checks & balances include natural predators, pathogens, the weather patterns, or a host of other factors. When a particular plant or animal is moved to an area where these checks & balances are not present, the specie is able to multiply and invade their new home.



An average home can support 22 million ants. The sting the ant causes is from alarm and not aggression. However, it can cause damage & pain.

The Hawaii Ant Lab is a small lab based in Hilo with 2 other locations in Kailua kona & Oahu. The Lab works with residents, agriculture, green industry & plant nurseries to provide solution for the many impacts caused by invasive ants. Hawaii Ant Lab is a program of UH Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit and it is dedicated to increasing knowledge about invasive any biology, management and eradication.

ROAR is a strong advocate for management strategies that do not involve inhumane treatment of animals or eradication. Perhaps the legislature can consider studying at the Ant Lab the benefits of trading this animal species to a State where this ant species can benefit a agricultural crop or help to regulate another species.. Certain species of fire ants decrease pets insect numbers. For example, tick populations may be decreased in pastures and yards infested with fire ants. They may reduce populations of chiggers (mites) and prey on flea larvae and hatching cockroaches around the home. Cotton & sugarcane growers, in particular, appreciate the predatory nature of ants because they eat boll weevils, caterpillars and other pests of cotton. In sugarcane fields, they feed on the sugarcane borer, which reduces the need for insecticides usually applied for these pests.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Angela Melody Young".

Angela Melody Young

Founder of ROAR



ROAR



Little Fire Ant
(*Wasmannia
auropunctata*)
invasive
species

How do LFA spread?

LFA can be accidentally spread by the movement of:



potted plants



cuttings



produce



pallets



rubbish



bee boxes



mulch/gravel/soil



household items



construction material

(<https://littlefireants.com/biology-and-ecology/>)



ROAR

Works cited

1. "Biology and Ecology of Little Fire Ants | Hawaii Ant Lab." Hawaii Ant Lab, littlefireants.com/biology-and-ecology/.
2. "Beneficial Effects of Fire Ants – Ant Pests." Ant-Pests.extension.org, ant-pests.extension.org/beneficial-effects-of-fire-ants/.

26 February 2023
BIISC
23 E Kawili St
Hilo, HI 96771
biisc@hawaii.edu



Attn: House Committee on Finance
RE: HB1150

Aloha,

The Big Island Invasive Species Committee would like to express our support for HB1550, providing funding for the Hawai'i Ant Lab (HAL).

The threat that LFA pose to the environment, economy, and way of life in Hawaii cannot be overstated. Successful treatment in infested areas can take a year or more, and on Hawaii island, where the ants have been established for 30 years, maintaining an ant-free property requires treatment *in perpetuity* as residents must regularly apply barriers and monitor their properties to prevent re-infestation. Already, residents have told us of friends and neighbors who have moved away, unable to live with the constant stings.

A 2015 report by the University of Hawaii predicted that without serious intervention on the Big Island, little fire ants will cost the agricultural industry \$6 billion over the next 30 years. Farmers here report often that they are unable to find workers to harvest when the stinging ants fall from trees onto the faces and the eyes of pickers. LFA carry with them their own food sources: plant pests like aphids, mealy bugs, and whiteflies, a constant bane to farmers and gardeners that bring additional costs for control. In other Pacific islands, farmers have abandoned their ancestral farms due to LFA infestation.

Since 2016, BIISC has offered a community support program targeted at the community level to encourage neighbors to work together and mobilize one another. The research generated by the Hawaii Ant Lab is integral to our program, allowing us to bring up-to-date solutions to our residents to fight LFA. HAL has developed effective, safe, and easy-to-use treatments that the community can embrace and use, and they continue to pursue critical research into new and better methods that can be used in Hawai'i to combat LFA while providing critical assistance in eradication efforts on Oahu, Maui, and Kauai.

We also fear the importation of the deadly Red Imported Fire Ant (RIFA), which is spreading across the world. HAL staff monitor ant populations airports and ship ports, forming an early detection system that will hopefully allow us to respond and eradicate any new invasions before the window of possibility slams shut -something that happens far too often with insects, as we've seen many times in recent years.

We strongly support this bill, and hope you will see how essential and important it is to provide this funding. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.

Franny Brewer
Manager

HB-1150-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2023 6:50:09 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2023 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Cards Pintor | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill.

Mahalo nui,

Cards Pintor

HB-1150-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2023 4:25:18 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2023 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Will Caron | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Please support HB1150 HD1.

HB-1150-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2023 6:44:43 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2023 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Melody Euaparadorn | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Mahalo for accepting this testimony in favor of passing HB1150. The loss of funding by the Hawaii Ant Lab comes at a critical time when an increasing number of isolated populations of Little Fire Ants are being identified across the islands. The requested funds will allow continued critical outreach, research, and rapid response to extinguish these outbreaks. I urge the committee to pass HB1150 as these efforts are imperative to prevent Little Fire Ants from spreading throughout our state and wreaking havoc in our agriculture fields, forests, and homes.

HB-1150-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2023 7:10:23 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2023 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Heather Forester | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am writing in SUPPORT of HB1150. Though ants are small in size, they pose large problems for our State. I have personally seen the devastating impacts that invasive ants cause the people, pets, and industries of Hawaii. Invasive ants, such as Little Fire Ants (LFA), are changing our way of life, and if left unchecked will forever change Hawaii as we know it.

People become desperate when trying to find solutions to manage invasive ants. Unfortunately, there is a lot of misinformation that is spread in the public realm, which can lead to pesticide misuse. People have also been known to go to the extremes of using fire to defend against ants; one such case led to a structure fire.

The Hawaii Ant Lab educates the public on best management practices that are safe and legal. The Hawaii Ant Lab needs your support to continue serving the State by helping to prevent the spread of LFA, providing education on the management of LFA and other invasive ants, and early detection of invasive ants that are not established in Hawaii.

Mahalo,

Heather Forester

HB-1150-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2023 8:12:10 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2023 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Jon | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

This bill is super important for the future of fire ant suppression on the big island of Hawaii. Without it lives and economies could be adversely impacted.

HB-1150-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 8:54:15 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/27/2023 10:00:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Kimeona Kane | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha,

Mahalo for taking the steps necessary to bravely and intentionally work towards protecting Hawai'i against invasive species. This, and others, need all the attention, support and resources necessary if we truly plan to protect the integrity of life in Hawai'i. Please support this effort to get ahead of these pests. Be bold, support a moratorium on interisland movement of materials from known infection areas and continue to push for additional resources to stay ahead of impacts like these. Mahalo nui for your consideration and service.

Kimeona Kane