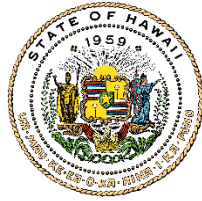


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Testimony of  
DAWN N. S. CHANG  
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on  
WAYS AND MEANS

Thursday, March 2, 2023  
10:00 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

In consideration of  
SENATE BILL 1552, SENATE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Senate Bill 1552, Senate 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). 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) 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 is administered through the Department under LNR 402 for the prevention, control, and eradication of harmful invasive species, and is well-positioned to support the Hawai'i Ant Lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State.

In addition to supporting this measure, the Department encourages increased funding for biosecurity at ports and airports, and for early detection and rapid response of newly introduced invasive species, which is more cost-effective than long term control operations.

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

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

LAURA H.E. KAAKUA  
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

**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  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD  
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

**MARCH 2, 2023  
10:00 AM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 211**

**SENATE BILL NO. 1552, SD1  
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

Chairperson Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 1552, SD1. The bill appropriates funds to the Hawaii Ant Lab to support research and management efforts to invasive ants in Hawaii, in particular the little fire ant. 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





**RE: Support for SB1552 SD1  
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

University of Hawai'i; Hawai'i Ant Lab; Little Fire Ant; Appropriation; Department of Land and Natural Resources

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

The Hawaii Ant Lab is a protector of Hawaiian agriculture. **Please completely fund this research laboratory and important outreach effort .**

The Hawaii coffee industry is challenged by invasive ants (*Wasmannia auropunctatam* Little Fire Ants or LFA), which is listed as one of the planet's most aggressive species ([www.issg.org/database](http://www.issg.org/database)). It is spreading throughout the Kona Districts and is devastating to coffee farms as well as homes since, workers will refuse to pick coffee cherry, because LFA will rain down and sting them when they are harvesting.

Farmers are also seeing a secondary impact of black sooty mold caused by the increase of plant pests (such as aphids, scale insects, and mealybugs) that LFA farm for food. This can lead to plant disease, reduction in the quality of produce, and overall crop loss for farmers. The Hawaii Ant Lab is one of our few lines of defense. They contribute valuable management expertise for homeowners and farmers alike.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support for the Hawaii Ant Lab and the pests that impact the coffee industry.

Mahalo nui loa!

Mark Petersen, President

**SB-1552-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2023 12:06:18 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
David Lambrecht	Testifying for Sage Farms Hawaii, LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We support the continued funding of the research, extention and operations of the Hawaii Ant Lab. They assisted us in eliminating an outbreak of LFA on our farm and also are assisting the neighboring property owners as they are locating and treating for LFA on other properties. Fortuately we were able to discover the encroaching LFAs at our property line because we learned about LFAs and testing through their their extention and community outreach. As a provider of fruit to local grocery stores and nursery stock to other growers, it is crucial that we and others like us are able to stay LFA free. The LFA problem is one we need to double down on, not ignore. The Hawaii Ant Lab is essential to controling LFAs. Please give them your full support and provide them with the funding they need to do their job successfully. Thank you!

**SB-1552-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2023 5:49:32 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
William C Wakefield	Testifying for Wakefield & Sons, Inc.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Finance and Ways & Means Committee,

My husband, Bill, and I have been successfully farming in Kona over 40 years, and derive 100% of our income from our farms, true farmers. We have a conventional coffee and avocado farm, and 2 certified organic farms, We have also served on the board of directors of the Hawaii Avocado Association, for many years, and we earned the NRCS 2016 Organic Farmers of the year award.

We are writing this letter in support of Senate Bill 1552. The Hawaii Ant Lab is truly a valuable asset to our agricultural community and residents of Hawaii.

The Hawaii Ant Lab has helped us as farmers for several years. We must eradicate this horrendous pest! If not, it will be extremely difficult to farm. I have been bitten by these Little Fire Ants, LFA, and so understand why we can not find workers to help us in the fields where the LFA are established.

We have received much needed help from the Ant Lab. Two of our farms have had Little Fire Ant, LFA, infestations. feel extremely fortunate to have had the Ant Lab's support. They have each given educational presentations to our two different farming communities, which many farmers and residents attended. One community completely eradicated the LFA, and the other is still working on it. also know of several resident friends that have used and are still using the Ant Lab's help. One neighbor was totally in denial, until the Ant Lab identified the ants as LFA. They are now ant free.

With our state encouraging food sustainability, it is extremely important Hawaii's agricultural industry and residents have the Hawaii Ant Lab's help, support, and education!

PLEASE support Senate Bill 1552 to help secure the future of farming in our state, as this is certainly a particularly dire situation, that has not only impacted our island's economy, but also the livelihood and lifestyle of our island community.

***As Hawaii Island is a great agricultural community, the Ant Lab is an invaluable resource. We need them to secure the future of farming on our island.***

Sincerely and with aloha,

Bill and Helen “Brooks” Wakefield

Ho’omalulu Farm, Pea Nani Farm, Wakefield Organics, Wakefield & Sons, Inc.

President and VP of Wakefield & Sons, Inc.



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

March 2, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

**TESTIMONY ON SB 1552, SD1**  
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference  
10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran, 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 1552, SD1**, 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.

TESTIMONY OF  
CASPER VANDERWOUDE  
HAWAII ANT LAB, HILO



BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
2 March 2023, 10:00 am  
CR 211 & videoconference

**SENATE BILL NO. 1552  
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

Chair Dela Cruz, vice chair Keith-Agaran, and esteemed members of the senate Committee on Ways and Means.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on Senate Bill 1552. 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.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Vanderwoude', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Casper Vanderwoude

Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Thursday, March 2, 2023  
Conference Room 211/Videoconference  
Hawaii State Capitol



### **Testimony in Support of HB 1150 HD1**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee,  
Thank you for the opportunity to provide **testimony in strong support of SB1552 SD1,**  
**Relating to Invasive species.**

My name is Michelle Montgomery and I am submitting this letter on behalf of the Hawaii Ant Lab. I've been working for the Hawaii Ant Lab, doing research and field operations for the past 13 years. I have seen firsthand how people's lives are impacted by Little Fire Ants and their concern over the continued spread. Prior to the Hawaii Ant Lab being formed (~ 2007) treatment options were limited and just not very effective. Since then, we've been able to devise new solutions and have made them freely available to the public. These solutions are now widely used by residents and industry workers alike to gain control over their LFA infestations. On the Big Island, we have been training residents, farmers, industry workers, and government workers on the safest best management practices and reducing the risk of spreading the ants or re-infesting their properties. Those who follow our methods reduce their infestations to where they're able to enjoy their yards, harvest crops, and just go about their days with without being constantly stung.

On other islands the Hawaii Ant Lab works on localized eradications of infestations as they are detected via treatments and long-term monitoring and we work with communities on risk awareness in the hopes that they don't find themselves in this situation again. Still, LFA continue to spread. In fact, in the past there have been 10 newly-detected infestations 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 (. 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 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 and also assists with early detection surveillance for other harmful ant species not yet detected in the state.

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 give the Ant Lab and the State of Hawaii time to secure such funding. This appropriation will ensure that we are not only able to continue our work, 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 consideration, and please feel free to reach out if you would like to discuss this issue further.

Mahalo Nui Loa,  
Michelle Montgomery, PhD  
Researcher  
Hawaii Ant Lab  
[michelle.montgomery@littlefireants.com](mailto:michelle.montgomery@littlefireants.com)

**SB-1552-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 3:35:38 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Danielle Frohlich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 1552 RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES that will appropriate funds to support the Hawaii Ant Lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State. Without HAL's work in researching, surveying for, and controlling little fire ants and other pest ant species, these destructive pests have the potential to severely impact the quality of life for people and animals in Hawaii. Please ensure that this organization's work can continue without interruption. Thank you.

**SB-1552-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 3:42:34 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Heather Forester	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in SUPPORT of SB1552. 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

**SB-1552-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 8:58:37 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
kathleen mishina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I live on the Big Island where LFA have taken over. Hawaii Ant Lab provided me valuable guidance to identify, treat and control spread of LFA on our property. I support this bill to keep Hawaii Ant Lab adequately funded.

**SB-1552-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 9:09:21 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB1552 SD1.

**SB-1552-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2023 8:50:12 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer Sonneborn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

I support this appropriation for the Hawaii Ant Lab. We have worked with the Ant Lab several times and found the employees to be knowledgeable, helpful and hard working. They conducted research on a farm where I worked for 2 years and they were thorough, reliable and professional. The HAL is our best tool to eradicate the scourge of little fire ants from our fields and homes.

Thank you,

Jennifer Sonneborn



**SB-1552-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2023 9:07:34 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Melody Euaparadorn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for accepting this testimony in favor of passing SB1552. 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 SB1552 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.

**SB-1552-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2023 9:09:24 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ozzy Bellwood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because living in Puna I have encountered little fire ants in my yard and in the yards of my friends. I have seen dogs, cats, and chickens blinded by these pests, and the Hawaii Ant Lab is acting to educate the public on the best methods of controlling these ants. The work the lab does is invaluable, especially working as a free resource for the public.

I have many friends whose children are stung just trying to play in the yard, who can't go and trim their trees without getting covered in welts. I've met some farmers and harvesters that dread going out to pick their crops due to them. The lab works to contain these ants and to teach the public how best to push them back out of their land. Thank you.

**SB-1552-SD-1**

Submitted on: 2/28/2023 6:48:39 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Suzanne Shriner	Testifying for Synergistic Hawaii Agriculture Council	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

SHAC is a non-profit trade organization representing over 1,600 agribusinesses in the coffee, macadamia, floriculture, and papaya crops. We assist our producers with responding to on-farm challenges, such as pest and disease, increasing production at the farmgate and developing markets for our Hawaii agriculture products.

The Hawaii Ant Lab is an important partner in the fight against invasive ants, in particular, the Little Fire Ant. Funding HAL at the full capacity is a necessary and vital component of the work they do on behalf of residents and farmers alike.

Mahalo for your consideration,  
Suzanne Shriner,  
Administrator,  
Synergistic Hawaii Ag Council

**SB-1552-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2023 8:58:42 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
James Fleming	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii Ant Lab is critical to protecting our islands from little fire ant and also any new problematic ant species that may arise. Hawaii NEEDS Hawaii ant Lab.

Mahalo for funding HAL and other invasive species projects. Little Fire Ants effect EVERYTHING, every aspect of our lives will be changed as well as every industry including agriculture and tourism if HAL isnt funded to help fight against the little fire ant.

**SB-1552-SD-1**

Submitted on: 3/1/2023 9:26:16 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/2/2023 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shaun Fleming	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a kamaaina I beg of you to please support SB 1552. Research, education and operations are all crucial to the work being done with the LRFA !

The State suffered from the pandemic, we all saw what happens when the visitors stop coming. We all suffered. Now just imagine if the visitors stop coming and agriculture is impacted too ! No one will want to work in the fields if they are attacked by LRFA. Our quality of life will never be the same if the ants get out of control, no one seems to recognize or have the concept of what a huge danger this is to our state. Please, please, please, look to our future and our children's and grandchildren's.

Thank you for supporting this bill.

Aloha, Shaun Fleming