

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

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

**MARCH 22, 2023
10:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325**

**SENATE BILL NO. 743, SD 1
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE**

Chairperson Gates and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 743, SD1. This bill is intended to extend the pesticide subsidy program for coffee leaf rust and coffee berry borer to June 30, 2025; extend the pesticide subsidy manager position until June 30, 2026; and appropriate funds for the program and program manager position. The Department supports this measure and offers the following comments. The pesticide subsidy program is currently funded by the pest inspection, quarantine, and eradication special fund. The department understands that the future of the special fund is uncertain, and we are also unsure whether the existing expenditure ceiling is adequate to fund and effectively perform the additional program responsibilities proposed in this measure. We are also requesting edits as follows: in Section 1, it states "including the use of United States Food and Drug Administration-approved pesticides". We are requesting this language be deleted. FDA does not approve pesticides. Further, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) registers pesticides but technically does not approve pesticides.



Invasive species are a primary threat to Hawaii's agriculture and economy. The coffee berry borer (*Hypothenemus hampei*) is a significant coffee pest in Hawaii and the world. The extension of the subsidy program and program manager position will allow the Department to continue to support coffee farmers by partially offsetting the costs of purchasing certain pesticides that contain *Beauveria bassiana* as an active ingredient for control of coffee berry borer, and certain fungicides, such as Priaxor Xemium in order to control coffee leaf rust to mitigate the damage these organisms cause to the coffee beans and plants.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

The Department strongly supports this bill.

REBECCA VILLEGAS

*Council Member
District 7, Central Kona*



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HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

*County of Hawai'i
West Hawai'i Civic Center, Bldg. A
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy.
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740*

TESTIMONY OF REBECCA VILLEGAS COUNCIL MEMBER,
HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL
ON SB 743, RELATING TO COFFEE PEST CONTROL
Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems
Wednesday, March 22, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

Chairperson Gates and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 743. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Hawai'i County Council.

Invasive species are a primary threat to Hawai'i's agriculture and economy. The coffee berry borer is a significant coffee pest in Hawai'i and the world. 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.

This bill extends the pesticide subsidy program to June 30, 2025, and extends the position of the pesticide subsidy manager to June 30, 2026. The extension of the subsidy will allow the Department to control the coffee berry borer and the coffee leaf rust to mitigate the damage these organisms cause to the coffee beans and plants.

For these reasons stated above, I urge the Committee on Agriculture and Environment to support this measure. 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", is written over a white background.

Rebecca Villegas
Council Member, Hawai'i County Council



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March 22, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON SB 743, SD1
RELATING TO COFFEE PEST CONTROL

Conference Room 325 & Via Videoconference
10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, 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 743, SD1, which extends the sunset date for the Coffee Berry Borer Pesticide Subsidy Program to 6/30/2025 and the program manager position, including the position's civil service and collective bargaining laws exemption, to 6/30/2026. It also requires the Department of Agriculture to report to the Legislature and appropriates funds for the operation and implementation of the Pesticide Subsidy Program.

Coffee is one of Hawai'i's signature crops; one that helps bring fame and tourists to Hawai'i. Coffee Berry Borer (CBB) threatens the entire Hawai'ian coffee industry. While the full tally is yet to be made, farms on Hawai'i Island have experienced deep losses. Some have failed. Moreover, large quantities of coffee have been downgraded due to insect damage, reducing the value of the remaining crop. CBB is a serious threat to Hawai'i's agriculture industry and the state's economy. While CBB is battled worldwide, no other coffee-growing origin shares Hawai'i's high labor costs and restrictions on pesticides that may be used elsewhere to fight this destructive pest. This places the industry at a competitive disadvantage when compared to the rest of the coffee-growing world.

Fighting CBB is a priority in other coffee-producing countries. The USDA has expressed its support targeted toward research, education, and mitigation. The industry's response has been immediate and multi-faceted. A non-profit CBB task force has been formed, including growers, processors, HDOA, UH, USDA, and county government. CTAHR and HDOA have been responsive and effective in their combined efforts. The industry has

committed countless private-sector dollars and has leveraged both State and Federal funds.

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 extension of the CBB funding and the inclusion of CLR in the Pesticide Subsidy Program should be viewed as a modest investment in one of the state's largest and most important agricultural crops.

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

SB-743-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 11:03:20 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/22/2023 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and members of the House AGR Committee:

Since 2010 Hawaiian Coffee has been plagued by Coffee Berry Borer (CBB) and most recently Coffee Leaf Rust (CLR). At the onset of CBB, the State's willingness to support Hawaiian Coffee growers through this subsidy program helped keep the industry alive while the farmers learned how to deal with finding reasonable control methods. It took CBB 10 years to find its way from Kona to the remainder of the island growing areas. Most of those areas did not need the subsidy program, but now they do.

Please help by supporting this bills' movement forward.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

SB-743-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 3:23:15 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/22/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Colehour Bondera	Kanalani Ohana Farm	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members:

Please accept my support for this legislation, with the following contingencies.

As a long-time (21 years) organic Kona coffee farmer, this is critical for our farm to have support for how to deal with problems which are new to Hawai'i.

As a Founding Member, President Emeritus and current Board member of Kona Coffee Farmers Association, it is clear that most farmers cannot and will not apply all of the approved pesticides for pest problems. We simply cannot take that many expensive risks. Our Board voted to include fertilizer in for efforts to deal with CLR, and this is a great and timely opportunity to do so...

Research and time have shown that the first and best thing which pest problems such as Coffee Leaf Rust are fought against with is tree/plant health. This is achieved by healthy soils, which means that enough food (fertilizer) is provided. As testified in 2022, to both the House and the Senate, we must have a more comprehensive system in place for farmer support.

This means that while a pesticide subsidy program is helpful as a band-aid for especially conventional farmers, that an equivalent subsidy for fertilizer can and should be amended to SB743. This does not need to be postponed until we have a separate piece of legislation, but rather can and should be put on the table now so that it is discussed in Conference Committee. Language was developed and put forth last year in HB1543.

The only strong argument last year in opposition to this need of farmers (to include fertilizer in the subsidy program) was that the HDOA did not have a means to so allocate such designated funds, since they have operated without a fertilizer or soils Department or Program for so long. That is the responsibility of the HDOA to rectify, and farmers do not need to wait while the legislature and HDOA discuss who is administratively responsible. SB660 this year addresses this HDOA need, but we must include designation and required allocations in SB743, in order for action to happen in the coming year (starting July 1st).

As a past member of the National Organic Standards Board which advises the US Secretary of Agriculture on policy and action decisions at the federal level, it is clear to me that things can be made to happen in many ways. For this reason, I ask that the legislation be amended now since this is the second year of the same request. HDOA can present their needs to so accomplish in

discussion or any subsequent Conference discussions. Farmers need to not be put on hold for yet another year. All Hawai'i coffee could and should be organic, and using Hawai'i-made, Hawai'i-ingredient fertilizers is one way for a much lighter carbon footprint. HDOA can and should be encouraging this to happen as fast as possible.

Finally, as the lead farmer on research funded by the Organic Farming Research Foundation, as well as by CTAHR, on the pest control impact of local fertilizer and Indigenous Micro-Organisms on Coffee Leaf Rust, many of us are already seeking to demonstrate that Coffee Leaf Rust can be impacted just as well as via imported pesticides. Research by farmers can be supported more by this recommended amendment, since then fertilizer can be accessed by more farmers in what is truly the worst coffee production year in history for many.

This legislation will be helpful to all farmers if amended, and I am available for present and/or future discussion on this topic.

Thanks you in advance for your serious consideration.

Sincerely,

Colehour Bondera

KANALANI OHAN FARM

colemel2@gmail.com

808-640-1643 iphone

SB-743-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 4:40:16 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/22/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bruce Corker	Rancho Aloha Coffee Farm	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Gates and Members of the Committee:

I am a coffee farmer in Holualoa in the North Kona District and **I strongly support SB743.**

Coffee is one of Hawaii's most famous agricultural crops.

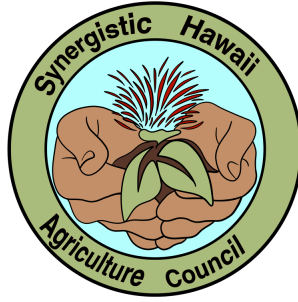
However, with the introduction of Coffee Berry Borer into Hawaii in 2011 and the introduction of Coffee Leaf Rust in 2020, Hawaii's coffee production is under serious threat of collapse.

While the Hawaii Department of Agriculture seeks to determine how these pests were introduced into the State and determines how their effects can be effectively mitigated, it is important that the pesticide subsidy program for combating CBB and CLR be extended to safeguard the continued existence of coffee as a viable crop in Hawaii.

Please pass SB743.

Thank you.

Bruce Corker, Rancho Aloha Coffee Farm



**RE: Support for SB743
RELATING TO COFFEE PEST CONTROL**

HDOA; Coffee Berry Borer; Coffee Leaf Rust; Pesticide Subsidy Program; Appropriation (\$)

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members,

The Synergistic Hawai'i Agriculture Council (SHAC) stands in support of this Bill. Our consortium represents 1,500 coffee, macadamia, papaya, and floriculture agribusinesses. SHAC's growers, processors, and shippers stretch across the State.

Economically, many smaller farms struggle to keep up with the cost burdens that the invasive Coffee Leaf Rust and Coffee Berry Borer has generated. **This subsidy increases the participation of growers in pest management and has made control much more effective regionally.** By lowering the cost of the product, more growers are likely to treat the pests, and the overall quality of the crop increases.

For every \$50 in subsidy costs spent per acre, approximately \$600 in improved crop value is returned to the farmer. This has the potential to increase income by up to \$2.4 million across our Kona, Ka'u and Maui coffee communities. The University of Hawaii estimates that each agricultural dollar circulates 11 times through the community, via local wages, goods and services. Supporting ag is good for the economy.

Thank you for considering support to this bill. Your attention makes a difference in the lives of hundreds of farmers.

Mahalo nui loa!

Suzanne Shriner
Administrator

SB-743-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 7:32:13 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/22/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolyn Witcover	Ma'alahi Farm	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support extending the sunset date for the Coffee Berry Borer Pesticide Subsidy Program to 6/30/2025 and the program manager position, including the position's civil service and collective bargaining laws exemption, to 6/30/2026. I support the appropriation of funds for the operation and implementation of the Pesticide Subsidy Program to be effective 6/14/2023, provided that the appropriation shall take effect on 7/1/2023.

SB-743-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 11:36:49 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/22/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqueline Wikum	Mai Mahealani Farm	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Coffee leaf rust is incredibly expensive to treat. Please continue supporting the subsidy.

Thank you
Jacque Wikum
President
Mai Mahealani Farm

SB-743-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 11:36:49 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/22/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqueline Wikum	Mai Mahealani Farm	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Coffee leaf rust is incredibly expensive to treat. Please continue supporting the subsidy.

Thank you
Jacque Wikum
President
Mai Mahealani Farm



RE: Support for SB743

RELATING TO COFFEE BERRY BORER

Department of Agriculture; Coffee Berry Borer; Coffee Leaf Rust; Subsidy Program; Appropriation (\$)

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

The Kona Coffee Farmers Association stands in dedicated support of this Bill. We represent over 180 farms in the Kona districts and our mission is to protect the economic interests of our growers.

The coffee berry borer (CBB) is a devastating invasive pest. Economically, many smaller farms struggle to keep up with the cost burdens that CBB and coffee leaf rust has introduced. This subsidy increases the participation of growers in pest management and has made control significantly more effective regionally. By lowering the cost of the product,

more growers are likely to treat the pest, and the overall quality of the crop increases. This benefits the state in added income to its resident farmers as well as added tax revenue. With coffee leaf rust, our organic farmers struggle with a lack of available fungicides. Research has shown that proper soil health management can possibly reduce the need for fungicidal sprays. The KCFA respectfully requests that a soil health subsidy be included with the pesticide program.

My family has a small working coffee farm in Captain Cook and like other members of KCFA we would like to thank you for considering support to this bill. Your attention makes a difference in the lives of hundreds of farmers.

Mahalo nui loa!

Mark Petersen
President

SB-743-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 12:09:52 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/22/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brandon Walker	Bayview Farm	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

While we have seen some improvements in the area of CBB with avrious pesticides, we desperately need to contiunue our studies. With the new CLR invasion sweeping the Big Island we now have a two front battle. Extending the sunset date for the coffee berry borer and coffee leaf rust pesticide subsidy program to 6/30/2025 and the program manager position, including the position's civil service and collective bargaining laws exemption, to 6/30/2026 is something that we must consider to continue this battle.



PO Box 168, Kealahou, HI 96750

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

March 22, 2023

RE: STRONG SUPPORT for SB743 SD1; RELATING TO COFFEE PEST CONTROL

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahalou and members of the committee,

I am Chris Manfredi, Executive Director of Hawaii Coffee Association.

The Hawaii Coffee Association's (HCA) mission is to represent all sectors of the Hawaiian coffee industry. Our members are located throughout the State of Hawaii and positioned throughout the supply chain.

SB743 SD1 extends the existing pesticide subsidy program, appropriates funds and extends the temporary program manager position within Hawaii's Department of Agriculture. This program has been a lifeline for Hawaii's coffee growers in the battle against invasive pests and disease; most notably Coffee Berry Borer and Coffee Leaf Rust.

A report released on January 21, 2022 by USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) suggests the value of Hawaii's green coffee crop in the 2021-22 exceeds \$113,000,000. This figure places coffee among Hawaii's highest value crops, yet does not account for upstream and downstream revenue in terms of value-added products and ancillary businesses. It's also important to note the coffee industry promotes tourism, and preserves open space, view planes and watersheds.

Coffee leaf rust (CLR) has been found on Hawaii Island, Kauai, Maui, Oahu and Lanai. CLR poses a devastating threat to Hawaii's coffee industry. CLR is known to spread rapidly and leads to defoliation and tree death. Coffee Berry Borer (CBB) remains a significant threat in all coffee producing regions.

Hawaii's coffee farmers have the highest cost of production anywhere, particularly with recent labor shortages and inflationary pressures. The cost to manage these compound threat layers caused by invasive species and economic forces are squeezing Hawaii's farmers more than ever before. Yet we still compete in a global market with our counterparts across the globe who do not share many of our high costs. We respectfully ask that the Pesticide Subsidy Program be continued and be adequately funded. Please consider it a wise investment in one of Hawaii's most important agricultural crops. Your support is vitally important to Hawaii's coffee growers and the many families and businesses that depend on our industry.

We respectfully ask you to pass SB743 SD1.

Please accept our thanks on behalf of Hawaii's hard working coffee producers.

SB-743-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 1:28:54 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/22/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Una Greenaway	Kuaiwi farm	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gates and Vice Chair Kahaloa

Thank you for hearing this very important bill. We coffee farmers are greatly in need of these subsidy funds. The costs to spray the coffe are unbearable. We must spray every 21 days to be effective. We would also like it if the subsidy could include fertilizers to increase the health of the plants, and fight the disease.

Please pass this bill.

Mahalo,

Una Greenaway

Kuaiiwi Farm

SB-743-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 2:52:45 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/22/2023 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support SB743 SD1.

SB-743-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 6:11:24 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/22/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Franz Weber	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is crucial for the livelihood of the Kona Coffee Farmers, as individuals as well as an industry

SB-743-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2023 10:18:17 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/22/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Franck Carisey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am the owner of Uluwehi Coffee Farm, a new farm my wife and I started in 2018 in Holualoa. At the time we started the farm, no one was talking about the CLR and how it could be such a major problem for coffee farmers. We have invested our savings into this project but the CLR has significantly impacted our plans, impacting our projected yield and requiring us to invest in spraying equipment and products we did not plan on acquiring. Although we have applied for the subsidy program, we have yet to receive any money from the program but are heavily relying on it for the years to come until a better solution is identified to address CLR and CBB. Thank you.

Franck Carisey

SB-743-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/21/2023 10:41:12 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/22/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J Ashman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure.