



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Tuesday, February 28, 2023 at 10:00 am

By

Anna Wieczorek, Interim Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 743 – RELATING TO COFFEE PEST CONTROL

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 743 relating to coffee pest control and to provide comments.

The coffee industry is the third highest valued agricultural commodity of Hawai'i. Coffee is grown on 7,100 acres in Hawai'i and has a farm gate value worth \$60,000,000, and green coffee has a value of about \$113,000,000. With the state's first detection of the Coffee Berry Borer (CBB) in 2010, and with the arrival of Coffee Leaf Rust (CLR) in 2020, this important crop faces serious threats to its existence. The College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources' (CTAHR) Cooperative Extension Service, in partnership with the Pacific Basin Agricultural Research Center, Hawai'i Agriculture Research Center, Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA), Synergistic Hawai'i Agriculture Council, and numerous coffee grower associations such as the Hawai'i Coffee Association, have helped develop and share integrated pest management practices to the coffee growers of Hawai'i.

The estimated annual economic benefit to Hawai'i coffee growers due to the implementation of integrated pest management practices recommended by CTAHR's Cooperative Extension Service is valued at \$33,000,000 per year.

The current pesticide subsidy act has been used by a significant number of Hawai'i's coffee growers to defray the cost of pest management practices to improve the profitability of their operations. By extending the current pesticide subsidy program to June 2025, and the program manager position to June 2026, it gives Hawai'i coffee growers this management tool to improve their profitability while a variety of new management practices to contain CBB and CLR are being developed by the agricultural

research community in Hawai'i and worldwide. We defer to HDOA regarding the appropriation of funds from the pesticide use revolving fund.

We support SB 743 provided that its passage does not impact priorities as indicated in our Board of Regents Approved Budget.

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 SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2023
10:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 211

SENATE BILL NO. 743
RELATING TO AGRICULTURE

Chairperson Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 743. 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.

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, and certain fungicides, such as Priaxor Xemium in order to control the coffee berry borer and the 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.





PO Box 168, Kealahou, HI 96750

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

February 28, 2023

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

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran 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 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.

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



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 strong 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 much 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 three generations who farm coffee and we support ourselves on 100% Kona. 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
Vice President

SB-743

Submitted on: 2/26/2023 7:36:57 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carolyn Witcover	Testifying for Kona Coffee Farmers Association	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.



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February 28, 2023

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

TESTIMONY ON SB 743
RELATING TO COFFEE PEST CONTROL

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 743, 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

LATE

SB-743

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 12:51:01 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Colehour Bondera	Testifying for Kanalani Ohana Farm	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members:

Please accept my support for this legislation, with some 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 Hawaii.

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.

However, research and time have shown that the first 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 pestiucide 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. Language was developed and put forth last year in HB1543. The only strong agrument 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 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, and HDOA can present their needs to so accomplish is discussion or any subsequent Conference discussions. Farmers need to not be put on hold for yet another year. All Hawaii coffee could and should be organic, and using Hawaii-made, Hawaii-ingredient fertilizers is one way for a much lighter carbon footprint, and HDOA can and should be encouraging this to happen as fast as possible.

Finally, as the lead farmer on research with is 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 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

LATE

SB-743

Submitted on: 2/28/2023 9:42:46 AM
Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johann Besserer	Testifying for Kona Restoration Farm, board member of KCFA	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This subsidy is of substantial assistance in fighting a critical pest to the local coffee industry and helps keep local farmers in business by partially lowering already high cost of fighting this pathogen

SB-743

Submitted on: 2/25/2023 4:34:00 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2023 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support SB743.

SB-743

Submitted on: 2/25/2023 10:08:44 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ken Farm	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is an important bill for protecting our vital agriculture, I support the intent of this bill.

Mahalo

Ken Farm,

SB-743

Submitted on: 2/26/2023 5:56:16 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2023 10:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

It is crucial to continue this program, to ensure that Coffee Farmers can survive

SB-743

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 9:36:06 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erika Zemby	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a small farmer and a new member of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association Board of Directors, I **strongly support SB743**. It is imperative for our farmers that this bill passes. Thank you for your vote.

SB-743

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 10:03:47 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2023 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Petersen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a coffee farmer and member of the Kona Coffee Farmers Association I am asking you to support SB743. The subsidy is important support for a major state industry that is beleaguered by damaging pests. This is one means to assist sustainability of Hawaiian coffee.