



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
Thursday, March 2, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

By

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

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 948 – RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

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

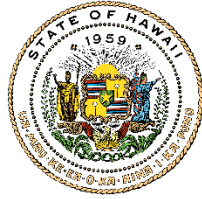
Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the intent of SB 948 relating to invasive species.

The albizia tree is an invasive species that can grow rapidly up to one hundred fifty feet tall, adapts to grow in nutrient deficient soils, and produces large quantities of wind-dispersed seeds. Albizia can quickly disrupt and replace native ecosystems and has the potential to cause major damage to property, infrastructure and human life. The purpose of the bill is to appropriate funds for the removal of hazard albizia trees that threaten public and private land.

Thank for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the intent of SB 948, and we defer to the Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources regarding the appropriation to allow the Division of Forestry and Wildlife to coordinate the removal of albizia trees.

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 948
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Senate Bill 948 proposes to appropriate funds to the Division of Forestry and Wildlife of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to coordinate the removal of hazard *Albizia* trees that potentially threaten public and private land. **The Department supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated the Department's Executive Budget request.**

Invasive *Albizia* trees are a major hazard to natural areas, private property and infrastructure. *Albizia* can thrive in a broad range of habitats and threatens native ecosystems. It produces large quantities of seeds which are wind dispersed and can be carried over long distances. *Albizia* in Hawai'i is one of the fastest growing trees on Earth. The rapid growth rate produces massive trunks and limbs that are prone to the sudden failure and collapse of enormous live branches without apparent cause.

As such, *Albizia* are a hazard to life and property in many settings. Removal of a mature *Albizia* tree can cost upwards of \$10,000 per tree in urban settings or along roadways when electricity infrastructure is involved. Depending on storm and wind conditions, forest managers may need to remove upward of 30 trees per year in order to protect property, roadways and lives.

There is also a need to keep *Albizia* from establishing in vulnerable ecological areas and priority watersheds. In these locations, foresters use less costly methods that range between \$80/tree to \$200/tree. These treatments can cover between fifty or one hundred acres per contract.

There is a need to increase the pace and scale of *Albizia* removal in both urban and forested locations. The Department supports the measure to proactively deal with *Albizia* and appropriate

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

funds to the removal of *Albizia* trees from priority areas. A continued and sustained effort to remove invasive *Albizia* from the landscape is a benefit to the public for health and safety, economically, and ecologically.

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



**Hawaiian
Electric**

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

SB 948

Relating to Invasive Species

Thursday, March 2, 2023
10:00 AM, Agenda item #14
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

Jennifer Zelko-Schlueter
Director, Government & Community Affairs (Hawai'i Island)
Hawaiian Electric

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jennifer Zelko-Schlueter and I am testifying on behalf of Hawaiian Electric in support of SB 948.

Albizia trees are a hazard to public safety and critical infrastructure. Strands of brittle, invasive Albizia trees up to 250 feet tall grow on many public and private properties. Tropical Storm Iselle brought down many Albizia trees in the Puna District on Hawaii Island, blocked roadways, and caused millions of dollars in damage to homes and important electric utility lines. Broken tree trunks continue to send out new growth creating even more unstable conditions, while seedlings are rapidly germinating in disturbed areas.

The Kona Low storm in December 2021 brought down many hazardous trees in east and west Hawaii on Hawaii island, which resulted in extended outages to many customers.

Albizia trees on public and private plan threaten public roadways and utility infrastructure. This bill would appropriate funds for fiscal year 2023-2024 to the Division

of Forestry and Wildlife to coordinate the removal of albizia trees and other trees that potentially threaten public and private land.

Accordingly, Hawaiian Electric supports SB 948. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



HAWAI'I FOREST INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION (HFIA)

P. O. Box 66 ❖ 'O'ōkala, HI
96774 Phone: 808-933-9411
Email: hfia@hawaiiiforest.org
Website: www.hawaiiiforest.org

Date: 02/28/2023

TO: WAM Chair Dela Cruz, WAM Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and WAM Committee Members

FROM: The Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA)

SUBJECT: In Support of SB1521 Relating to Sustainable Land Use

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Committee Members,

On behalf of the directors and members of the Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA), please support SB948 Relating to Invasive Species. While HFIA supports this measure, which appropriates funds to allow the Division of Forestry and Wildlife to coordinate the removal of hazard albizia trees that potentially threaten public and private land, we hope that harvested trees will be well utilized.

Considering that this same legislature has drafted SB1193 Relating to Albizia, which would require the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to establish a grant program to assist persons who use albizia trees to create usable commercial products or are developing ways to use Albizia trees to create usable products, it seems that Albizia trees harvested by DOFAW could be donated to grant recipients to be made into usable products, assuming SB1193 passes and such a program is actualized.

While we support SB948 and understand the need to harvest Albizia as a precaution for the safety and wellbeing of Hawai'i's residents and infrastructure, and hope that you will support the measure as well, we hope that optimizing the use of harvested trees will be seriously considered.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Guy Cellier, Acting President

Hawaii Forest Industry Association

Established in 1989, HFIA's is a nonprofit organization founded by people committed to sustainable forest management. HFIA's mission is to promote healthy and productive forests and a sustainable forest industry through management, education, planning, information exchange, and advocacy. HFIA has over 130 members including woodworkers, landowners, sawyers, foundations, foresters, growers, educators, environmentalists, architects, millers, ranchers, and others interested in HFIA's mission and goals.

HFIA Board of Directors

Officers: Acting President/Vice-President Guy Cellier, Secretary Peter D. Simmons, Treasurer Wade Lee
Directors: Thomas Calhoun, Jeremy Campbell, Aaron Hammer, Nickolas Koch, Tai Lake, Michael Sowards, Irene Sprecher, Michael Tam, Jorma Winkler, Ron Wolfe, Aileen Yeh

SB-948

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 2:14:22 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chuck Chimera	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members,

I strongly support SB948 which appropriates funds for the Division of Forestry and Wildlife to coordinate the removal of hazard albizia trees that potentially threaten public and private land.

Albizia is a highly invasive tree present on all of the main Hawaiian Islands, and can impact infrastructure, human health and the natural environment. Please provide DOFAW with the resources to address this statewide environmental and economic weed.

Mahalo,

Chuck Chimera

Honokaa

SB-948

Submitted on: 2/27/2023 9:08:25 PM

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

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

Comments:

Please support SB948.

LATE

SB-948

Submitted on: 3/1/2023 4:06:08 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John-Carl (JC) Watson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on SB948 relating to Invasive Species and Albizia. **I strongly support of this bill.** As a natural resource manager and global expert with regards to albizia management, I cannot overstate the need to proactively manage albizia. The rapid growth rate and wide distribution across the state poses a dire threat to critical infrastructure, native forersts, agricultural practices, and ohuman health. Please seriously consider moving SB948 forward and giving some overdue support towards mitigating hazard albizia trees.

With sincere gratitude,

JC Watson

LATE

SB-948

Submitted on: 3/1/2023 8:29:32 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sidney Lynch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Yes, removing albezia trees should receive dedicated funding.. They should be eradicated, especially in the upper watershed and more useful trees to help prevent erosion should be planted to replace them. But first step get rid of these fast spreading trees.