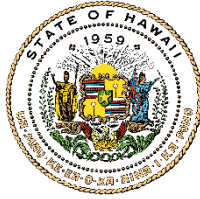


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

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

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
FIRST DEPUTY

DEAN D. UYENO
ACTING 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

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Monday, January 12, 2024
2:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 312 & Via Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2132
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

House Bill 2132 proposes to appropriate funding for the Hawai'i Ant Lab to support little fire ant mitigation and eradication efforts. **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 Executive FY 2025 Supplemental Budget Request.**

The Legislature has declared that invasive species are the biggest threat to Hawai'i's economy, environment, tourism, health, and way-of-life of its residents, and no invasive species encapsulates this devastation better than the little fire ant. This bill would provide desperately needed funding for the Hawai'i Ant Lab (HAL) to fully fund current staff and add new staff on islands that are seeing a serious increase in little fire ant infestations.

HAL was established in 2009 to address the overwhelming need for research and assistance to address and eradicate little fire ant infestations. Effective treatment is labor-intensive and involves surveying, treatment, and long-term monitoring that can take years to document results scientifically. In recent years, the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC), through the Department and the Department of Agriculture, helped fund HAL. Still, current funding levels, including \$500,000 from the legislature in FY24, was not enough to prevent HAL from furloughing their staff this January. This comes at a critical time when infestations on O'ahu are on the rise and moving to a place where continued management is the only option. Kaua'i has

two large infestations, one of which is located along a major waterway and will take a dedicated on-island team, which currently does not exist, to manage and control those infestations.

Maui had one of the most extensive little fire ant infestations in the State, not including Hawai'i Island, in Nāhiku, Maui. The site was close to 180 acres, running along a major stream and stretching through densely vegetated terrain and private property. With funding provided by HISC and the County of Maui, the Maui Invasive Species Committee hired a dedicated little fire ant team that worked with Hawai'i Ant Lab to develop an aerial treatment. After several treatment and monitoring missions, this previously infested area is now down to only a few ants. This shows what can be achieved with consistent and adequate resources.

Given the crisis of little fire ant, this funding bill would help address the short and long-term needs to control this invasive pest and develop new tools that could be deployed to manage more widespread infestations and increase extension services to support farmers and industries severely impacted on Hawai'i Island.

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

DEXTER KISHIDA
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 AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

**FEBRUARY 12, 2024
2:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 312**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2132
RELATING TO THE HAWAII ANT LAB**

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Member of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2132 relating to the Hawaii Invasive Species Council. This bill appropriates funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources for the Hawaii Ant Lab to mitigate the impacts of Little Fire Ants in Hawaii. The Department of Agriculture has the following comments on this measure.

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 would like all data collected by the HAL relating to invasive ant surveys to allow us to better coordinate regulatory, response and control, and research efforts in the State's Standard GIS Data Platform, Esri, ArcGIS.

. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





NORTH SHORE NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 27

c/o NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION • 925 DILLINGHAM BOULEVARD SUITE 106 • HONOLULU, HAWAII, 96817
TELEPHONE: (808) 768-3710 • FAX: (808) 768-3711 • INTERNET: <http://www.honolulu.gov/nco>

January 27, 2024

Sharon Hurd
Chair
State of Hawaii, Department of Agriculture Board
Plant Quarantine Conference Room
1849 Auiki Street
Honolulu, HI 96819

North Shore Neighborhood Board Testimony in Support of Strong HDOA Invasive Species Rules

Aloha Chair Hurd,

The North Shore community on O'ahu is very concerned about the proliferation of invasive species – especially the Little Fire Ants (LFA) and Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) and their negative impact on the foliage, animals, and residents of our area and the entire state.

The State of Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) has the sole authority to stop or regulate the movement of invasive pests or material infested with an invasive pest, yet the Department lacks clear, sensible rules that can better address the spread of invasive pests around or within an island. We are now finding that the CRB are moving from palm trees to non-palm trees in our area. Unfortunately, no one seems to have a clue on how to fight or prevent the spread of these evil pests. What will happen next? Infestations of our grass and shrubbery? What about our livestock and pets; not to mention our keiki. We need clear rules and the Department needs funding to fight and fine those who spread these invasive pests.

It should be illegal for nurseries and garden shops to knowingly sell plants infested with LFA or coqui frogs, bags of compost with Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles, or to sell any materials infested with serious pests. Further, HDOA should have the authority to require a nursery infested with a serious pest like LFA to control the infestation before selling infested plants and materials. The proposed changes to chapter 72 are vital to preventing the establishment and spread of the next serious invasive pest.

The Hawaii Department of Agriculture should also pass the rules that re-start the compliance program to manage the spread of Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles around O'ahu in greenwaste and other host material.

Mālama 'āina,

Kathleen M. Pahinui

Kathleen M. Pahinui
Chair, North Shore Neighborhood Board #27

Cc: Council Member Matt Weyer, District II
Senator Brenton Awa
Representative Sean Quinlan
Representative Amy Perruso



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 12, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HB 2132
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Conference Room 312 & Videoconference
2:00 PM

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 HB 2132, which appropriates funding for the Hawaii Ant Lab to support little fire ant mitigation and eradication efforts.

Invasive species have become one of the most devastating problems impacting Hawai'i. Many invasive species are damaging Hawai'i's environment and economy. Agriculture has a vested interest in this matter. Agriculture suffers when invasive species are introduced. Every year, numerous new pests are introduced into the State, such as the coqui frog, coffee berry borer, macadamia felted coccid, little fire ant, coconut rhinoceros beetle, small hive beetle, and varroa mite, to name a few. Control measures take time to develop, leaving farmers and ranchers at risk. This is not consistent with the State's goal of increasing self-sufficiency and sustainability.

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. Adequate funding for the Hawai'i Ant Lab funding is critical to support their little fire ant mitigation and eradication efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.



Food+ Policy Internship 2024

food@purplemaia.org

February 11, 2024

To: Chair Gates, Vice-Chair Kahaloa, and members of the House Committee of Agriculture and Food Systems.

Subject: **Support of HB2132**

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

This testimony is representing Hawaii Food+ Policy. We are writing to express our strong support for H.B.2132: "Relating to Invasive Species," which seeks appropriate funds to support the Hawaii Ant Lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the state.

The spread of little fire ants poses a significant threat to both human and animal health, as well as to the economic well-being of our communities. These invasive pests infest agricultural fields and farms, where they damage crops and painfully sting workers. Little fire ants have caused significant disruption and economic damage on Hawaii Island, where they are widespread, and are now spreading rapidly on Oahu.

The Hawaii Ant Lab plays a critical role in addressing the overwhelming need for research, advice, and technical assistance to address and eradicate rapidly spreading little fire ant infestations. However, funding for the Hawaii Ant Lab has been insufficient, with previous sources of funding ceasing due to budget cuts and the repeal of the Agriculture Development and Food Security Special Fund. The appropriation of funds outlined in H.B. NO.2132 is essential to support the Hawaii Ant Lab in its efforts to mitigate the effects of little fire ants in the state.

The Food+ Policy internship develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2024, the cohort of interns are undergrads and graduate students from throughout the UH System. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.



Food+ Policy Internship 2024

food@purplemaia.org

By addressing the threat of little fire ants, this bill contributes to the protection of our agricultural resources, the well-being of our communities, and the future food security of our state. We urge the committee to give favorable consideration to H.B. NO.2132 and to take decisive action to support the appropriation of funds to the Hawaii Ant Lab. Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify, and we stand ready to support the implementation of this critical legislation.

Sincerely,

Kawika Kahiapo Hawaii Food+ Policy Team

The Food+ Policy internship develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2024, the cohort of interns are undergrads and graduate students from throughout the UH System. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.



House of Representatives
Committee On Agriculture and Food Systems
Monday, February 12, 2024
2:00 PM Conference Room 312
State Capitol

Testimony in Support of HB2132

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloe, and Members of the Committee,

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) is **in support of HB2132**, *Relating to Invasive Species*, which provides funding for the Hawaii Ant Lab (HAL) for fiscal year 2024-2025.

These funds are urgently needed to support HAL's work across the State. HAL is a world leader on researching the methods and tools for the control and eradication of little fire ants (LFA). As LFA is spreading across the State, this research is needed to support existing control needs and to develop new options for LFA response. HAL also provides extension services to help communities control impacts on their properties on Hawaii island.

For locations where LFA are not widely established, HAL's staff provides on-the-ground response to control LFA infestations or to support each island's control efforts. To achieve the local eradication of an infestation, at least eight applications of ant bait must be made at intervals over a period of a year. These baits must be placed throughout the affected area, including in trees, a process that most community members cannot meet to achieve local eradication.

HAL has struggled to secure funding for its critical work and had to furlough and reduce hours for its existing staff. LFA is still spreading on Hawaii Island, is rapidly spreading across Oahu, and there are large infestations that will need significant efforts on Kauai. On Maui, the Maui Invasive Species Committee receives significant support from the County and is able to take the lead on all LFA infestations in the County, but relies on HAL's research, tools, and collaborative help. HAL should be adding staff to address these newly infested areas while eradication may still be possible, and providing much-needed support to Hawaii Island businesses and residents, not furloughing or cutting hours for staff due to lack of funding.

It is critical that HAL has sufficient funding to staff its operations and continue research on LFA management. The additional funding for HAL proposed in HB2132 will support HAL's activities and allow HAL to retain its current staff and continue its work across the State.

Mahalo for the opportunity to support HB2132 and for consideration of our testimony.

Aloha,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Christy Martin".

Christy Martin
CGAPS Program Manager

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stephanie Easley".

Stephanie Easley
CGAPS Legal Fellow



SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

February 12, 2024 2:00 PM Conference Room 312

In SUPPORT of:

HB2104: RELATING TO THE HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

HB2131: RELATING TO THE TWO-LINED SPITTLEBUG

HB2132: RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

HB2133: RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

HB2139: RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

HB2537: RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

HB2644: RELATING TO LITTLE FIRE ANTS

HB2672: RELATING TO LITTLE FIRE ANTS

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Committee Members,

On behalf of our over 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS HB2104, HB2131, HB2132, HB2133, HB2139, HB2537, HB2644, and HB2672**, which will help to mitigate the ongoing and future impacts of invasive pests on our native ecosystems, cultural practices, food security, public health, economy, and the overall quality of life of present and future generations.

Hawai'i's history provides us with a host of lessons regarding the wide-ranging and potentially irreversible damage that invasive species can inflict on our islands and ways of life. Invasive plants and wildlife have overtaken entire watersheds, impacting not just native habitat but also reducing aquifer recharge, increasing our vulnerability to floods and wildfires, and smothering our nearshore reefs and waters with runoff. Parasites and other pests have impacted local food production and increased the use of toxic pesticides on farms and in home gardens, risking both public health as well as threatening stream and nearshore species critical to our aquatic ecosystems. Invasive animals have also extirpated native species, continue to threaten others with outright extinction, and continue to undermine public health by acting as vectors for zoonotic diseases. Most recently, the spread of invasive pests such as the little fire ant, coconut rhinoceros beetle, hala scale, two-lined spittlebug and others will require substantial and long-needed policies and investments over the long-term, to prevent additional and even greater impacts to our islands and our future generations.

Accordingly, the Sierra Club strongly supports the much needed policies and investments contemplated in these measures. More financial support is critical for the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council to fulfill its biosecurity mission; funding for targeted campaigns to address the little fire ant and two-lined spittlebug are critical to preventing the ecological, cultural, agricultural, public health, and economic impacts of these pests; financial support for



SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

businesses and organizations to engage in invasive species control and eradication will engage more of the community in the all-hands-on-deck fight to combat their spread; agricultural invasive species placards will encourage agricultural producers to proactively employ best management practices and other measures to prevent and address invasive species on agricultural lands; and quarantine requirements will help to fill a critical gap in our regulatory toolbox that has allowed the sale of infested plants and other communities – a gap that has likely contributed to the establishment of coconut rhinoceros beetle on O‘ahu, and the ongoing spread of little fire ants across the islands.

Much remains uncertain as we continue to reckon with the consequences of Hawai‘i’s longstanding failure to enact critical biosecurity protections. However, it is certain that much stronger action, including but not limited to the proposals in the aforementioned bills, will be necessary to mitigate or prevent the worst of these and other future impacts to our lives and that of our children and future generations.

Accordingly, the Sierra Club of Hawai‘i respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS** these measures. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.



HAWAII PEST CONTROL ASSOCIATION

Century Square – 1188 Bishop St., Ste. 1003*Honolulu, HI 96813-3304

Telephone (808) 533-6404 • Fax (808) 533-2739

LATE

February 12, 2024

Testimony To: House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Representative Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair

Presented By: Tim Lyons, CAE
Executive Director

Subject: H.B. 2132 – RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

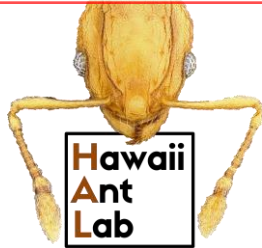
Chair Gates and Members of the Committee:

I am Tim Lyons, Executive Director of the Hawaii Pest Control Association and we support this bill.

The Hawaii Ant Lab has done great work in the past, providing research and methodologies regarding little fire ants. This is a very important function, not only for individual citizens but also for the industry.

Based on that, we support this bill and respectfully request your favorable consideration.

Thank you.



www.littlefireants.com

LATE

RECEIVED

Date & Time

Feb 12, 2024, 6:55 pm

TESTIMONY in Support of HB 2132

Dear Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems. I write this testimony in support of HB 2132 that appropriates funds to the Hawaii Ant Lab (HAL) for FY 24-25.

Testimony was provided during last year's legislative session (2023) where I stated that Oahu was at a "tipping point" with Little Fire Ants (LFA) and that without substantial investment Hawaii's prognosis was bleak. Since then, an addition 15 infestations on Oahu, and 2 on Kauai have been detected leaving the HAL and Hawaii in a much worse situation than we were to begin with. The HAL has testified to the need for recurring funding for many years only to receive single year funding time and time again by the State and through competitive grants. This is not a sustainable model for any invasive species management program, especially LFA. I understand that the State cannot fund every worthy cause at full capacity and that competitive grants are necessary to fill gaps. But the "gaps" should not be so large that the HAL is unable to take or maintain meaningful action. Responsibility lies on the State and each county to ensure the ongoing LFA management is properly funded year after year. It is up to YOU to decide in what direction we go with regards to LFA management. Please keep in mind the amount and type of action the HAL can put forth is directly related to the financial investment and commitment levels by the State.

Since last year's testimony I've seen support for the HAL grow exponentially. This is evident by 4 Bills being introduced during this legislative session to support LFA management. This is very encouraging and hopefully sends a message to your legislative colleagues regarding the importance of and need for this work statewide. I can only hope this support continues to grow for the HAL and all of our partner agencies and organizations to continue this work.

Mahalo for your time and all of your efforts in finding solutions to a difficult problem.

Michelle Montgomery
Manager
Hawaii Ant Lab

HB-2132

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 10:57:12 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/12/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqueline S. Ambrose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES.

Appropriates funding for the Hawaii Ant Lab to support little fire ant mitigation and eradication efforts.

HB-2132

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 1:23:56 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/12/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keoni Shizuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I stand in support of HB2132.

Hawaii’s ecosystem is being, and has been, devastated by invasive species for the last few decades. Little Fire Ants is one of the worst invasive species to have reached our islands and has the potential to transform the way we live in Hawaii, by limiting our ability to enjoy the outdoors, affecting how we are able to have pets outdoors, and could do irreparable damage to our environment. We need to get this under control on all islands, before it is too late.

Thankfully, the Hawaii Ant Lab has been leading that charge, but they need more staff and funds so they can do more right away! Please support this bill!

These funds are needed to protect our fragile ecosystem and protect our way of life in Hawaii.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Keoni Shizuma

HB-2132

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 10:21:57 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/12/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure to appropriate funds to support the Hawaii ant lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State. Efforts towards stronger action to mitigate or prevent the worst impacts of invasive pests on our native ecosystems, cultural practices, food security, public health, economy, and the overall quality of life of present and future generations are critical.

Living on the Windward side, my neighbors and I are particularly concerned to learn of the alarming proliferation of little fire ants (LFA) infestation sites on Oahu, including areas not far from our own community. Hawaii Island has already been suffering because of these extremely harmful invasive pests and the lack of action to effectively address them. LFA have had devastating impacts there, and not only to agriculture and the economy, but to the environment as a whole and to the quality of life of families in these communities. We need to eradicate LFA throughout the state, and not allow them to continue to spread. Failure to take timely action on LFA will only make it harder and more expensive to address this serious problem. Appropriating funds to support the Hawaii ant lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State is a must.

Please pass this important measure.

HB-2132

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 11:53:01 AM

Testimony for AGR on 2/12/2024 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Mahalo for accepting this testimony in favor of passing HB2132. The current lack of funding for 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 HB2132 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-2132

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 12:31:38 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/12/2024 2:00:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beverly Heiser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Committee Members,

I support HB 2132.

HB-2132

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 12:43:29 PM

Testimony for AGR on 2/12/2024 2:00:00 PM

LATE

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

Comments:

Little Fire Ants have been present in Hawaii since at least 1999, and unfortunately, they are here to stay. The need for assistance with prevention and management of this invasive ant species is ongoing on Hawaii Island, and with the exponential increase in detections on Oahu, the need for Hawaii Ant Lab's services are ever growing. Hawaii Ant Lab also collaborates with invasive species committees on the other islands who are also facing the invasion of Little Fire Ants.

Little Fire Ants impact everyone, and if you have them, you cannot dodge their impact without proper management. The Hawaii Ant Lab has been researching this species for 15 years, and has the institutional knowledge to get the job done, correctly and legally. With additional funding, Hawaii Ant Lab can keep their doors open, and employ additional staff to assist the State with this persistent pest.

I support this Bill.