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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

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HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

Testimony of  
DAWN N. S. CHANG  
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on  
FINANCE

Thursday, February 22, 2024  
1:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Via Videoconference

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 2546 HOUSE DRAFT 1  
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

House Bill 2546 House Draft 1 allows for the use of fine meshed nets for the protection of plants against invasive species. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure.**

The coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) is considered a major agricultural and environmental pest particularly damaging to coconut palms (*Cocos nucifera*). It can also be found in betelnut (*Areca catchu*), Pandanus species, banana, pineapple, and sugarcane. Adults damage living palms, either killing the tree due to direct damage or opening the tree to fatal damage from other insects or pathogens. On Pacific Islands with no natural enemies of this beetle, the damage can be extreme. In Palau, where the beetle first invaded in 1942, the coconut palm was eradicated entirely on some islands, with overall mortality across the archipelago reaching 50%. CRB was detected on O'ahu in 2013 and remained contained to that island until last year, with the first non-O'ahu detection on Kauai and subsequently on Hawai'i Island and Maui.

Unlike little fire ants, treatment options are still relatively limited to managing CRB infestations. There are pesticides and applications that can be used but these can be complex and require special licensing making them not practical for the general public. Netting is a management and detection tool for CRB that can exclude other medium to large pests and can be used on individual plants that property owners want to protect. It's one of the few tools that can be applied on trees when pesticides can't be used. The CRB Response Team primarily applies this tool to breeding material on the ground or to the crown of palms near the base of fronds.

The Department provides a few recommendations to consider:

- Nets used for the purpose of managing CRB damage should be more visible to prevent entanglement of non-target wildlife, such as birds. This can include defining large filament diameter, dark color, and/or the inclusion of visual cues like ribbons or balls, and not to use any type of mist net material that is used for bird work.
- Include general language like, "*applied in a manner that it is very unlikely to*" entangle birds, or become dislodged and enter water, or entangle or disturb native and beneficial animals.
- Exempt netting (and traps) for CRB control from being considered a pest control device, therefore, vendors do not have to have a license to sell pesticides.

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

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE**

**FEBRUARY 22, 2024**  
**1:00 PM**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 308 AND VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2546, HD1**  
**RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

Chairperson Yamashita, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2546, HD1 relating to invasive species. The bill allows for the use of fine meshed nets for the protection of plants against invasive species. The bill also requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a registration program for purchasers of fine meshed nets in the State. The Department offers comments on this bill.

The Pesticides Branch within the Plant Industry Division is the regulatory authority and state lead agency granted primacy by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) through a cooperative agreement to enforce the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). Through this delegated authority and the authority granted by Hawaii Pesticides Laws (HRS 149A), the Pesticides Branch implements an inspection and compliance program to regulate the use, distribution, licensing, and certification of pesticides and pesticide applicators statewide.

Fine meshed nets identified in this bill fall into the category of pesticide devices as defined by FIFRA. Federal law requires devices which intend to trap, destroy, repel,



or mitigate a pest be manufactured at a US EPA registered establishment. All manufacturers, distributors, and retailers of these fine meshed nets for Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle entrapment will be subject to pesticides distribution laws as laid out in HRS 149A.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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February 22, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

**TESTIMONY ON HB 2546, HD1**  
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Conference Room 308 & Videoconference  
1:00 PM

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, 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 2546, HD1**, which allows for the use of fine meshed nets for the protection of plants against invasive species and requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a registration program for purchasers of fine meshed nets in the State.

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.

Fine-meshed nets have proven to be an effective trapping tool for coconut rhinoceros beetles. Currently, HAR 13-75 restricts fine meshed nets less than 2 inches stretched mesh. This measure will provide necessary resources to farmers and ranchers to help control and hopefully eradicate invasive species in Hawai'i.

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



**WAIANAЕ COAST  
COMPREHENSIVE  
HEALTH CENTER**

Aloha Chair Kyle T. Yamashita, Vice Chair Lisa Kitagawa, and members of the House Committee on Finance,

This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC) and was prepared by Jesse Mikasobe-Kealiinohomoku, Food Access Manager, and Ian Ross, Public Affairs Director. We offer our strong support for HB2546, which proposes allowing the use of fine meshed nets to safeguard our plants. This will have a positive impact in helping to support our local ecosystem, especially the indigenous niu, against the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB).

Our center, committed to the health and environmental well-being of West Oahu, has established Hawaii's largest coconut nursery. We recognize the CRB not only as a pest but as a catalyst for broader ecological threats, disrupting native ecosystems and compromising cultural legacies. CRB's presence has turned the lifecycle of our niu from one of growth to a cycle of death, necessitating urgent and effective control measures.

Fine meshed nets represent a significant advancement in our fight against CRB. They provide a barrier to prevent these beetles from drilling into the crowns of coconut trees, which is crucial not only to mitigate attacks but also to prevent secondary infections that often follow the beetles' damage. Integrated pest management, including the use of these nets, is a forward-thinking solution. The ability to deploy fine meshed nets aligns with common-sense environmental management practices, integrating multiple pest mitigation strategies to protect against CRB and ensuring the long-term viability of our niu.

This proactive approach not only preserves the physical trees but also safeguards the cultural and economic sustenance they provide for our communities. It is not just a matter of conservation; it is a matter of public health and cultural preservation. Our ethos of Comprehensive Care recognizes that the environment, culture, and food systems have profound impact on the health and wellbeing of the residents of West Oahu.

We commend the House Committee on Finance for considering this legislation. We urge you to pass HB2546 and support our ongoing efforts to protect and nurture the land that sustains us.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Jesse Mikasobe-Kealiinohomoku  
Food Access Manager  
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Ian Ross  
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**HB-2546-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 2:31:12 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Clemens Mayer       | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha,

I am Clemens Mayer, and I strongly support HB2546 HD1

As someone involved in several aspects of conservation, as well as a practitioner of hana no'eau threatened by invasive species. Invasive species, such as the Little Fire Ant, are or can be major threats to public health, as well as being majorly detrimental to commercial sectors such as agriculture and tourism. Therefore, I strongly support this motion to protect the environment of Hawai'i nei from invasive pests.

With warmest regards, Clemens Mayer

**HB-2546-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 8:34:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 1:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Patrick Chee        | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Please support the use of fine mesh nets to protect plants from invasive species. Please also support the funding for a program to register the use of such fine mesh nets. This program will assist in protecting palms and other plants around the state from being attacked by Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles (CRB). Without such measures, coconuts, other palms, and numerous other plants will continue to be unprotected from CRB. The State of Hawai'i's funding of registration and support of fine mesh net use on plants is needed as soon as possible. Please correct the date to fund and implement the program on 7/1/2024.

Mahalo,  
Patrick Chee