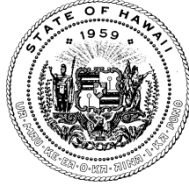


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



EDWIN H. SNIFFEN
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

Deputy Directors
Nā Hope Luna Ho'okele
DREANALEE K. KALILI
TAMMY L. LEE
ROBIN K. SHISHIDO

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

March 12, 2024
3:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 224 via Videoconference

**H.B. 2650, H.D. 2
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

Senate Committees on Transportation and Culture and the Art and Agricultural and
Environment

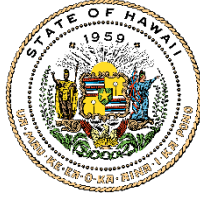
The Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) **supports** this bill that appropriates funds to the HDOT for the coordinated removal of albizia and other invasive trees that potentially threaten public roadways. These invasive trees affect areas within HDOT's right-of-way and operations when the invasive trees impact HDOT's emergency response.

Appropriating funds will enable the HDOT to collaborate with the public utilities to proactively remove albizia and other invasive trees, providing safer roadways for the public.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

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

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 Senate Committees on
TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS
and
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Tuesday, March 12, 2024
3:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 224 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2650 HOUSE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

House Bill 2650 House Draft 2 appropriates funds to the Department of Transportation (DOT) for the coordinated removal of *Albizia* and other invasive trees and requires matching funds from public utilities. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure provided that it does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive FY 2025 Supplemental Budget Request.**

The Department recognizes the threat invasive *Albizia* poses to natural areas, neighborhoods, and infrastructure because of its large, brittle limbs, which are prone to breaking and falling in windy, rainy, or stormy weather conditions. The need for extensive *Albizia* removal has already been made clear after the impacts of Hurricane Iselle on the Big Island in 2014, where downed trees blocked roads and evacuation routes, cut utility lines, and damaged homes.

Albizia is one of the fastest-growing trees in Hawai'i, growing up to 15 feet in one year. Its large canopy shades out the sun for native Hawaiian flora, and its presence alters the soil content, making it easier for invasive weeds to take hold. Forests of *Albizia* are a problem across Hawai'i, and the Department supports this bill, which will help address this threat by providing matching funds from utility providers to remove trees that threaten public roadways and utility infrastructure right-of-ways on public and private land.

We greatly appreciate the work of legislators on this measure and the opportunity to testify in support.

TESTIMONY OF
LEODOLOFF R. ASUNCION, JR.
CHAIR, PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
STATE OF HAWAII

TO THE
SENATE COMMITTEES ON
TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS
and
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

March 12, 2024
3:00 p.m.

Chairs Lee and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Inouye and Richards, and Members of the Committees:

MEASURE: H.B. No. 2650, HD2

TITLE: RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES.

DESCRIPTION: Appropriates funds to the Department of Transportation for the coordinated removal of albizia and other invasive trees. Requires matching funds from public utilities. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD2)

POSITION:

The Public Utilities Commission ("Commission") offers the following comments for consideration.

COMMENTS:

The Commission appreciates the intent of this measure to enhance public safety by supporting vegetation management to reduce threats to utility infrastructure and to enhance the Department of Transportation's capacity to coordinate invasive tree removal with the added support of public utility matching funds. The Commission notes that, assuming matching funds are provided from a utility's current vegetation management program, this cross-collaborative effort to manage vegetation would benefit ratepayers while also reaffirming the Commission's commitment to reducing hazards to utility infrastructure and public safety.

The Commission suggests removal of the defective date and believes that this bill should become effective on passage.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

BIISC
23 E. Kawili St.
Hilo, HI 96720
(808) 933-3340
www.biisc.org



March 8, 2024

Hearing: Committee on Agriculture and Environment and Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts
RE: HB2650

Aloha,

I am writing to express support for HB2650, which appropriates funds to the Department of Transportation for the coordinated removal of albizia and other invasive trees that threaten roadways. This bill is crucial in addressing the significant threat posed by albizia trees to our island's infrastructure and to public safety. Since 2013, the Big Island Invasive Species Committee (BIISC) has been actively involved in efforts to mitigate the impacts of albizia. These invasive trees have proven to be a serious problem, capable of causing widespread damage to property, infrastructure, and natural ecosystems.

The aftermath of Tropical Storm Iselle in 2014 highlighted the urgent need for coordinated action to address the albizia threat. The storm's impact was catastrophic, with fallen trees blocking roads making them impassable for emergency response personnel, motorists, and residents. People were left stranded for hours, and many endured weeks without power, causing immense hardship and economic losses. Iselle underscored the critical importance of proactive measures to mitigate the risk posed by albizia trees. Without intervention, we face the very real possibility of similar disasters occurring in the future, with potentially even more severe consequences.

HB2650 represents a significant step forward in efforts to combat the albizia threat. By providing funding for the coordinated removal of these invasive trees, the bill will help safeguard our communities, infrastructure, and natural environment. Furthermore, the requirement for matching funds from public utilities demonstrates a commitment to shared responsibility in addressing this issue.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.

Na'u nō me ka mahalo,

Kawehi Young
Community Engagement Liaison
Big Island Invasive Species Committee



**Hawaiian
Electric**

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON
TRANSPORTATION & CULTURE & THE ARTS
AND
AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT**

**HB 2650, HD2
Relating to Invasive Species**

Tuesday, March 12, 2024
3:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

Jennifer L. Zelko
Director, Government and Community Affairs
Hawaiian Electric

Dear Chair Lee, Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Jennifer Zelko and I am testifying on behalf of Hawaiian Electric in **strong support** of HB 2650, HD2, Relating to Invasive Species.

HB 2650, HD2 proposes to appropriate funds for the removal of albizia and other invasive trees that potentially threaten public roadways and utility infrastructure rights of way on public and private land, provided that the funds are matched by a public utility.

Albizia trees are a hazard to public safety and critical infrastructure. Strands of brittle, invasive trees up to 250 feet tall grow on many public and private properties. Tropical Storm Iselle brought down many Albizia trees, 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.

HB 2650, HD2 proposes to appropriate out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii an unspecified amount for fiscal year 2024-2025 for the department of transportation to coordinate the removal of albizia and other invasive trees that potentially threaten public roadways and utility infrastructure rights of way on public and private land, provided that a public utility provides matching funds.

Accordingly, Hawaiian Electric strongly supports HB 2650, HD2. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



HAWAII FOREST INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION (HFIA)

7192 Kalaniana'ole Hwy
Suite A-143A, #249
Honolulu, HI 96825
Phone: 808/933/9411
Email: hfia@hawaiiiforest.org

Date: 03/11/24

TO: TCA Chair Lee, AEN Chair Gabbard, TCA Vice Chair Inouye, AEN Vice Chair Richards and TCA, AEN Committee Members

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

SUBJECT: In Support of HB2650 HD2 Relating to Invasive Species

Dear Chairs Lee and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Inouye and Richards, and TCA, AEN Committee Members,

On behalf of the directors and members of the Hawaii'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA), please support HB2650 HD2 Relating to Invasive Species. We are supportive of this measure which appropriates funds to allow the Division of Forestry and Wildlife to coordinate the removal of hazardous albizia trees that potentially threaten public and private land.

Concerned with responsibly utilizing our natural resources, HFIA's hope is that harvested Albizia, and other invasive trees, will be utilized by the state or private parties for innovation with the invasive wood. Being that Albizia is so prevalent, and other invasive woody species are often removed from public and private spaces for various reasons, we see this as an opportunity to explore possible uses of the wood. Utilizing the wood from these trees to create goods that would otherwise be imported into Hawaii not only benefits Hawaii's natural environment, the safety of lives and infrastructure, but also has the potential to positively affect Hawaii's economy.

We hope that you will support HB2650 HD2 and the removal of problematic Albizia and invasive trees, but we strongly urge that the use of these harvested trees (other than simple mulching) will be seriously considered and encouraged.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Guy Cellier, 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: President Guy Cellier, Vice President Irene Sprecher, Secretary Taylor Coons, Treasurer Wade Lee, Directors: Jeremy Campbell, Aaron Hammer, Nicholas Koch, Michael Sowards, Aileen Yeh

HB-2650-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 9:09:18 AM

Testimony for TCA on 3/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Derek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly Support the eliimination of albizia trees. Albizia are very tall (up to 150 feet) but fragile. They are prone to uprooting. A broken branch might fly maybe 50 yards or more during hurricane or high winds into utility lines, roads and adjacent neighborhood homes roofs. Suggest ***zero tolerance mandatory removal of any albizia trees within 100 yards*** of any utility lines, roads, etc as well as ***any tree growing on any property owned by water and electric utililty company***. The Board of Water Supply owns property in windy upper Manoa by Paradise Park which has many large overgrown albizia trees that currently endanger utility lines, access roads and the neighboring homes.

HB-2650-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 12:42:09 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

Yes to appropriating funds to the Department of Transportation for the coordinated removal of albizia and other invasive trees. Requires matching funds from public utilities

LATE

HB-2650-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2024 5:26:27 PM

Testimony for TCA on 3/12/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carol Kwan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because invasive tree species grow rapidly (Albizia can grow 15' a year) and can imperil those using our roadways, particularly during strong wind events like hurricanes. HDOT needs the resources to be able to combat these high risk trees on a regular basis.

I am a Certified Arborist with my own consulting business on Oahu.