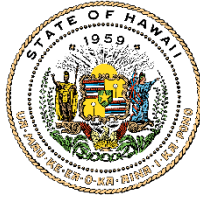


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

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 House Committee on  
AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Wednesday, March 20, 2024  
10:15 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 325 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of  
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 189 AND HOUSE RESOLUTION 169  
URGING THE STATE TO PROHIBIT THE INTRODUCTION OF BIOCONTROL  
AGENTS THAT MIGHT THREATEN ECONOMICALLY IMPORTANT FORAGE  
GRASS SPECIES

House Concurrent Resolution 189/ House Resolution 169 urges the State to prohibit introducing biocontrol agents that might threaten economically important forage grass species. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) opposes these measures.**

The Department opposes these measures because biocontrol agents are proven and scientifically tested methods to control harmful invasive species. Biocontrol agents are designed and tested to only target a specific invasive species and not have unintended consequences on other economically important non-target species.

The Legislature has defined invasive species as the "single greatest threat" to our communities' economy, natural environment, and health. Biocontrol is one of the tools used to address this threat and preserve natural areas in Hawai'i. Broadly prohibiting the use of biocontrol agents to address potentially damaging grasses would mean these invasive species could be left to spread unchecked, as no other viable treatment options may be available. If left unchecked, some invasive grass species can pose a high cost by contributing to other problems such as wildfires, native species displacement, erosion, and decreased water recharge.

The Department advises that rigorous testing of biocontrol agents has led to the safe introduction of numerous biocontrol agents in Hawai'i over the past 45 years with no environmental or non-target impacts to species other than their intended invasive pest target.

The Department supports the ranching industry but opposes these measures, which would broadly prohibit the use of biocontrol agents on all forage grasses.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on these measures.

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**DEXTER KISHIDA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

**RECEIVED**  
**Date & Time**  
Mar 19, 2024, 10:39 am

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

**LATE**

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

**BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE**

**MARCH 20, 2024**  
**10:15 AM**

**CONFERENCE ROOM 325 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 189 / HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 169**  
**URGING THE STATE TO PROHIBIT THE INTRODUCTION OF BIOCONTROL**  
**AGENTS THAT MIGHT THREATEN ECONOMICALLY IMPORTANT FORAGE GRASS**  
**SPECIES.**

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Concurrent Resolution No.189 urging the state to prohibit the introduction of biocontrol agents that might threaten economically important forage grass species. The Department strongly supports this measure.

The Department recognizes the role of ranchers as stewards of the land and specifically their role in managing the range lands of the state. Grazing is by far the most efficient way of managing our rangelands. The department also acknowledges many rangeland grasses are introduced. However, introduced grasses typically have a quality which native grasses do not: they are suitable for use as forage for livestock. Targeting rangelands for biological control will create a cascade of issues. Native grasses are unsuitable for grazing so replacing forage with native grasses increases the acreage we would need to manage through mechanisms other than cattle, thereby increasing fire risks.



While not a biological control agent, we can look at the impacts of two-lined spittlebug on the kikuyu rangeland of Hawaii Island to see what kind of impacts biological control can have. In the areas devastated by the spittlebug, the rangeland has been replaced by a variety of weeds. Managing these weeds (fireweed, Christmas berry, pamakani, etc.) is more time consuming. Ranchers affected by the spittlebug are now caught with managing weeds they know are more damaging to the environment and have lost grazing lands for their cattle. Herd sizes have roughly dropped in half in areas where TLSB has devastated the range while management costs are sky rocketing.

The Department has both roles to develop biological control agents and steward their release into the environment by the Plant Pest Control Branch and to regulate the importation and release of biological control agents by the Plant Quarantine Branch. Both branches will closely examine any requests to move forward with targeting rangeland forage for biological control.



**Hawaii Cattlemen's Council, Inc.**

**COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS**

Rep. Cedric Asuega Gates, Chair

Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa, Vice Chair

**HCR189**

**URGING THE STATE TO PROHIBIT THE INTRODUCTION OF BIOCONTROL AGENTS THAT MIGHT THREATEN ECONOMICALLY IMPORTANT FORAGE GRASS SPECIES.**

Wednesday, March 20, 2023, 10:15AM  
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **strongly supports HCR189** which recognizes the importance of rangelands management for land stewardship and urges the State to prohibit the introduction of biocontrol agents that might threaten economically important forage grass species.

As wildfires become more common and devastating, we turn our attention to ways to prevent these catastrophes. Some organizations and agencies have suggested the introduction of biocontrol to reduce the presence of invasive grasses, but these biocontrol agents have the potential to cause damage to important forage grass species. These forage grasses are important tools for ranchers to use to feed their herds, which in turn produces ecosystem services that benefit the wider community. Ensuring that ranchers can continue to successfully raise their cattle means that there is stewardship of the land and benefits such as carbon sequestration, soil health, invasive species removal, groundwater recharge, fire fuel load reduction – all on top of the production of beef.

We urge the State to protect these important forage grass species and ensure that Hawaii's cattlemen can continue to manage these lands. Rangeland management can actually be a tool for reducing wildfires, and ranchers have proven to be great assets when fires break out as they have the tools, equipment, personnel, and expertise of the area to assist. Whether it's through contributing water from the reservoirs they manage, cutting fuel breaks with dozers they operate, or generally keep fuel loads down through managed grazing, Hawaii's ranchers are an asset when it comes to wildfire management.

Hawaii's climate allows for grass growth at a rate only seen in a few places worldwide, which is an economic advantage necessary for our geographically isolated businesses to remain competitive in the domestic market. Introducing a biocontrol that has the potential of negatively impacting this strength, could have catastrophic consequences on our industry and ability to manage large landscapes.



The introduction of a biocontrol for grasses could be devastating to Hawaii's cattle industry. We are willing and able to be part of the solution for wildfire management and urge the State to recognize the important of forage grasses that could be unintentionally targeted by a biocontrol meant for another species.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Our member ranchers represent over 60,000 head of beef cows; more than 75% of all the beef cows in the State. Ranchers are the stewards of over 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

Nicole Galase  
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council  
Managing Director

**RECEIVED**  
**Date & Time**  
Mar 19, 2024, 10:39 am

LARRY JEFTS FARMS, LLC  
PO BOX 27  
KUNIA, HAWAII 96759  
(808) 688-2892

**LATE**

HCR189, URGING THE STATE TO PROHIBIT THE INTRODUCTION OF BIOCONTROL AGENTS THAT MIGHT THREATEN ECONOMICALLY IMPORTANT FORAGE GRASS SPECIES.

House AGR Hearing – 10:15 AM  
Wednesday, March 20, 2024

Testimony By: Larry Jeffs  
Position: Support

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the House AGR Committee:

I am Larry Jeffs, owner and operator of Larry Jeffs Farms, LLC. We have more than 42 years of Hawaii farm experience on Molokai and Oahu. Our family farms grow about 1 million pounds of import replacement produce weekly. I am a volunteer director, serving as Chair of the West Oahu Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). I have been an officer of the Hawaii Farm Bureau for many years.

We appreciate the recognition of ranchers as land stewards of the rangelands that represent about 750,000 acres of the state's total land mass. As rangeland stewards, ranchers are an essential and active part of wildfire management. Livestock grazing is a practical tool for managing forage grasses to reduce the threat of fire.

HCR189 is supported because introducing biocontrol agents in these grasslands might cause unintended consequences for ranching and beef cattle production. We strongly support policies, funding and other resources for the undermanagement of vegetation on lands in the public and private sector.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony.

**RECEIVED**  
**Date & Time**

Mar 19, 2024, 1:33 pm



**LATE**

P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759  
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921  
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

March 20, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

**TESTIMONY ON HCR 189 & HR 169**  
URGING THE STATE TO PROHIBIT THE INTRODUCTION OF BIOCONTROL  
AGENTS THAT MIGHT THREATEN ECONOMICALLY IMPORTANT FORAGE GRASS  
SPECIES

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference  
10:15 AM

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 HCR 189 and HR 169**, which urges the State to prohibit the introduction of biocontrol agents that might threaten economically important forage grass species.

As wildfires become more common and devastating, we turn our attention to ways to prevent these catastrophes. Some organizations and agencies have suggested the introduction of biocontrol to reduce the presence of invasive grasses, but these biocontrol agents have the potential to cause damage to important forage grass species. These forage grasses are important tools for ranchers to use to feed their herds, which in turn produces ecosystem services that benefit the wider community. Ensuring that ranchers can continue to successfully raise their cattle means that there is stewardship of the land and benefits such as carbon sequestration, soil health, invasive species removal, groundwater recharge, and fire fuel load reduction – all on top of the production of beef.

We urge the State to protect these important forage grass species and ensure that Hawai'i's cattlemen can continue to manage these lands. Rangeland management can actually be a tool for reducing wildfires, and ranchers have proven to be great assets when fires break out as they have the tools, equipment, personnel, and expertise of the area to assist. Whether it's through contributing water from the reservoirs they manage, cutting fuel breaks with dozers they operate, or generally keeping fuel loads down through



managed grazing, Hawai'i's ranchers are an asset when it comes to wildfire management.

The introduction of biocontrol for grasses could be devastating to Hawai'i's cattle industry. We are willing and able to be part of the solution for wildfire management and urge the State to recognize the importance of forage grasses that could be unintentionally targeted by a biocontrol meant for another species.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important subject.

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**Date & Time**  
Mar 20, 2024, 8:28 am



**Hawaiian  
Electric**

**LATE**

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS**

**HCR 189 / HR 169**

**Urging the State to Prohibit the Introduction of Biocontrol Agents that  
Might Threaten Economically Important Forage Grass Species**

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

10:15 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 325

Dave Nagata  
Land Agent  
Hawaiian Electric

Dear Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dave Nagata and I am testifying on behalf of Hawaiian Electric in **support** of HCR 189 / HR 169.

As we look for ways to prevent wildfire catastrophes from ever happening again, we must also consider the impacts, intended and unintended, that certain suggested solutions, such as the use of biocontrol agents, may have on the surrounding environment. Hawaiian Electric understands that the introduction of biocontrol agents to reduce the presence of invasive grasses could unintentionally cause damage to forage grass species that are an important tool for ranchers to use to feed their herds, which in turn, results in benefits such ecosystem services that benefit the wider community. Ensuring that Hawaii's cattlemen can continue to successfully manage these rangelands means that there would be continued stewardship of large landscapes and can be a tool, in and of itself, for reducing wildfires.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

**HCR-189**

Submitted on: 3/18/2024 3:43:24 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/20/2024 10:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jacqueline S. Ambrose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Yes to; URGING THE STATE TO PROHIBIT THE INTRODUCTION OF BIOCONTROL AGENTS THAT MIGHT THREATEN ECONOMICALLY IMPORTANT FORAGE GRASS SPECIES.

**HCR-189**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 7:25:02 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/20/2024 10:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jimmy Greenwell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this Resolution. It is a reminder that our forage grass species play a critical role in our community ecosystem. Remember that ranchers are basically grass farmers whose focus is on growing a diverse mix of groundcovers which not only provide feed for livestock but minimize the amount of bare soil on the landscape. Bare soil presents erosion risk, loss of watershed benefits, and an invitation to invasive plant species. Our grass farmer ranchers are the stewards of the 20% of our state's land mass which is rangeland. If they lose their key forage grasses, we would lose their stewardship of this precious resource. Lets focus our biocontrol efforts elsewhere.

**HCR-189**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 8:09:16 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/20/2024 10:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Angelica Melone	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii’s beef cattle production is a major agricultural industry in the State, contributing to jobs, livelihoods, and environmental management.

The rangelands that support cattle make up roughly 20% of the State's land area. The production of healthy and sustainable beef in the State is dependent on quality forage grass species, many of which have been intentionally introduced. I support HCR 189 and efforts to prohibit the introduction of biocontrol agents that may threaten economically important forage grass species.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

**HCR-189**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 9:46:20 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/20/2024 10:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

GOOD IDEA. OVERDUE.

MAHALO!

**HCR-189**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:02:36 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/20/2024 10:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Aileen K . F. Yeh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of this resolution. With out the forage grasses, I believe many invasive broadleaf weeds will take ove the open ground.

**HCR-189**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 10:19:43 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/20/2024 10:15:00 AM

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**Date & Time**  
Mar 19, 2024, 10:39 am

**LATE**

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Douglas Beaton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this resolution because we need to protect our forages to feed our cattle and continue managing the lands. Ranchers can be a solution to wildfire management and we need to support them staying in business . Even if a biocontrol has a target species, it can also negatively impact nontarget species. There are other options for controlling invasive species that won't threaten important forages.

Mahalo

John



**LATE**

**HCR-189**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 11:33:43 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/20/2024 10:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Harry von Holt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB189.

**LATE**

**HCR-189**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 3:07:07 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/20/2024 10:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jill J. Mattos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this resolution to protect forage for cattle operations.

There is other means that can be used to control Invasive Species.

We need ranchers to stay in business,with no forge there will be no beef.

**RECEIVED**  
**Date & Time**  
Mar 20, 2024, 6:28 am

**LATE**

**HCR-189**

Submitted on: 3/19/2024 7:36:40 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/20/2024 10:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jason Moniz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this resolution. The release of biocontrol agents that have a negative impact on forages important to the livestock industries would be an act of agroterrorism.

**HCR-189**

Submitted on: 3/20/2024 7:02:03 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/20/2024 10:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Randy Cabral	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support