

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

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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 2104
RELATING TO THE HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

House Bill 2104 proposes to appropriate funds to support the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council to ensure its long-term viability and prevent future problems; and declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded. **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 Department's Executive Budget request.**

In 2002 the Legislative Reference Bureau released a report that declared invasive species are the biggest threat to Hawai'i's economy, environment, tourism, and health and way-of-life of its residents. Subsequently, the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) was formed in 2003 by Hawai'i Revised Statute 194 with the special purpose of providing policy level coordination and planning for the control and eradication of harmful invasive species. The Department administratively houses the HISC, and the Department's Division of Forestry and Wildlife provides program support to the HISC.

Since 2005, the HISC has disbursed funds annually for innovative projects addressing invasive species prevention, control, outreach, and research. Existing programs at state agencies address some of the core needs in this area, including inspection and quarantine at ports (HDOA), control of invasive plants and animals on state lands (DLNR), detection and control of vectors of human disease (DOH), control of invasive species along public transportation routes (DOT), planning

initiatives (DBEDT), and academic expertise (UH). HISC-funded projects do not replace these core programs. Interagency HISC funds are used to complement these existing programs by:

1. Filling gaps between agency mandates or existing agency programs, and/or
2. Advancing our collective knowledge through research and development of new tools.

Disbursement of project funding via the HISC ensures that, at the cabinet level, multiple state agencies are identifying and prioritizing actions on annual basis that might otherwise go unfunded.

Past HISC awards supported the initial operational equipment and supplies for the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle response in 2013, early research and development of *Wolbachia* birth control for mosquitos, and exploratory work to identify natural enemies for *Miconia*, strawberry guava, and *Albizia*, and Herbicide Ballistic Technology (HBT). This funding is critical to supporting the ongoing operations of the Island Invasive Species Committees, Hawai'i Ant Lab, and the Ballast Water and Biofouling Program at the Division of Aquatic Resources and has been critical to leveraging additional funds from other sources to fully support these projects.

Despite the growing threat of invasive species, HISC has not had an increase in funding in over four years. Figure 1 shows the amount of funding available for projects versus the total amount requested. Funding available is only able to provide partial support for the majority proposal requests, which on average is less than 50% of the total requested. And every year a handful of projects receive no funding, which is more to do with the limited amount of funding then a lack of merit for the proposed project.

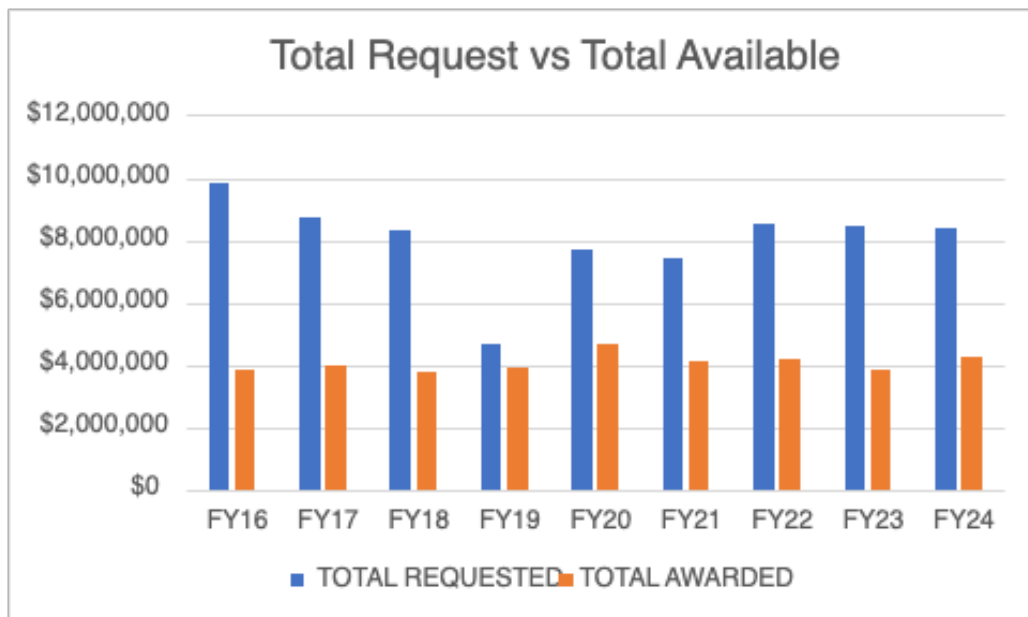


Figure 1 shows HISC funding available to support interagency projects and programs versus what the amount requested, which falls short of the actual need.

House Bill 2104 would benefit HISC and its partners by getting the amount available closer to the total requested each year which continues to grow with new pests spreading in the State (Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle, little fire ants), increased costs of equipment (vehicles, facilities), and the need to increase wages to retain staff and counteract inflation and the high cost of doing business in Hawai‘i.

The dispersal of funding is a competitive process with the Council’s review and approval as the final step, but there are key funding priorities this appropriation could address:

- Rapid and emergency response operations for new pest incursions both for individual islands and the State.
- Core operations for the Island Invasive Species Committees and Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species.
- Research and Development of natural enemies for high-priority pests like *Albizia* trees and Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles.
- Enhanced research and development of new tools and technology to prevent and manage invasive species through the University of Hawai‘i.

The Department recognizes the Legislature’s concern for the issue and greatly appreciates the introduction of this measure. 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

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

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT
AND WATER AND LAND**

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

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2104
RELATING TO THE HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2104 relating to the Hawaii Invasive Species Council. This bill appropriates funding for the Hawaii Invasive Species Council. The Department offers comments.

The Hawaii Invasive Species Council provides excellent coordination of effort between multiple partner agencies, especially through funding it provides through annual request for proposals. However, to be consistent with the goals of the Interagency Biosecurity Plan, data collected through HISC functions, awards, and by partners, should be entered into a database which the Department has full access as it relates to survey and control actions so the department can coordinate regulatory, response and control, and research statewide. This data should be maintained in the State's Standard GIS Data Platform, Esri, ArcGIS.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important measure.





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February 12, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HB 2104
RELATING TO THE HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

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 2104, which appropriates funds to support the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council to ensure its long-term viability and prevent future problems.

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.

Proper funding for HISC is critical for the protection of Hawai'i's environment and economy and the health and lifestyle of its people through the support of invasive species prevention, control, research, outreach, and planning. This measure will provide necessary resources to HISC to help control and hopefully eradicate invasive species in Hawai'i.

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



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



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.



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 HB2104

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

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) is **in support of HB2104**, *Relating to the Hawaii Invasive Species Council*, which will increase the amount appropriated to the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) for fiscal year 2024-2025.

As noted in HB2104, the vast majority of HISC funds are used to provide grants, on a competitive basis, for activities that complement existing programs in the State by:

1. Filling gaps between agency mandates or existing agency programs, and/or
2. Advancing our collective knowledge and capacity through research and development of new tools.

The need for these grants is far greater than HISC's available funds. High-impact invasive species such as coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB), coqui frog, and little fire ant (LFA) are rapidly spreading in Hawaii, and control actions and research on new control methods for these and other invasive species are desperately needed. The additional funding for HISC proposed in HB2104 will support these control actions and activities to prevent the introduction, spread, and establishment of high-impact invasive pests, including through the work of the Hawaii Ant Lab, each of the island Invasive Species Committees, and the Ballast Water and Biofouling Program at the Division of Aquatic Resources.

Mahalo for the opportunity to support HB2104 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

LATE

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy
Support for HB 2104, Relating to the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council
Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
February 12, 2024, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 312 & Videoconference**

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

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) **supports** HB 2104, relating to the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council, which appropriates funds to support the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council to ensure its long-term viability and prevent future problems.

The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council is an inter-departmental collaboration comprised of the Departments of Land & Natural Resources, Agriculture, Health, Transportation, Business, Economic Development & Tourism), and the University of Hawai'i. The council was established in 2003 following a report that indicated earlier efforts were piecemeal, lacking in adequate rigor. Its purpose is to provide policy level direction, coordination, and planning among state departments, federal agencies, and international and local initiatives for the control and eradication of harmful invasive species infestations throughout the State and for preventing the introduction of other invasive species that may be potentially harmful.

Hawai'i's unique biodiversity is due in part to its geographic isolation and volcanic origin. Hawai'i's native plant and animal species are those that arrived here without the assistance of humans: seeds for Hawai'i's first plants arrived here by floating on the waves, being blown by the wind, or transported by traveling birds. Likewise, Hawai'i's native animal species are those that flew here on the wind or swam here on the water. Introduction events like these are very rare, and so the species that made it to Hawai'i lived here in relative isolation over the 70 million years of Hawai'i's volcanic history. Species that evolve on islands do so in the absence of some of the world's more competitive species and it is these invasive species that threaten the state's biodiversity, as well as economic drivers including the agriculture and tourism sectors. Supporting the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council and ensuring its long-term viability is essential to ensuring that Hawai'i's biodiversity is protected.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2104.

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HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 10:43:00 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 THE HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL.

Appropriates funds to support the Hawaii Invasive Species Council to ensure its long-term viability and prevent future problems. Declares that the general fund expenditure ceiling is exceeded.

HB-2104

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 1:17:58 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 HB2104.

Hawaii's ecosystem is being, and has been, devastated by invasive species for the last few decades. While we lack great biosecurity and are under a constant threat of new invasive species, due to our lack of inspectors and inspections at our ports, the Hawaii Invasive Species Council, which grants funds to each island's Invasive Species Committee, has been doing a great job protecting our islands and mitigating as many invasive species as possible!

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-2104

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 12:24:04 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 2104.