

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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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 2546
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

House Bill 2546 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 be also 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 up 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 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 color, 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, 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
Deputy to the Chairperson

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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

FEBRUARY 12, 2024
2:00 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 312 AND VIDEOCONFERENCE

SENATE BILL NO. HB2546
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill HB2546. This bill allows for the use of fine meshed nets for the protection of plants against invasive species. The Department supports this bill.

Fine meshed nets are used throughout the Pacific as one of the tools to control Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles impact to trees. Wrapped around the tree, it provides a physical barrier which the beetles get stuck in.

In addition, the law may need to be amended for businesses to sell the fine meshed nets. As a pest control device, the manufacturer will need to register the product. This would affect both brick and mortar sales and online sales.

Realizing the nets can be used for purposes not stated within this bill, the department defers to Department of Land and Natural Resources as there may be additional concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





HB 2546
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES
House Committee on Agriculture

February 12, 2024

2:00 pm

Conference Room 312

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** HB 2546, which proposes a significant amendment to Chapter 141 of the Hawai‘i Revised Statutes, allowing the use of fine-meshed nets for the protection of plants against invasive species. **This legislation is crucial for safeguarding our delicate ecosystems and, by extension, the well-being of the Native Hawaiian community.**

Hawai‘i is also known as the extinction capital of the world. The extinction of plant species has resulted in the end of traditional and customary practices and indigenous knowledge passed down for centuries that are associated with those plants. Invasive species pose a significant threat to Hawai‘i’s unique biodiversity, impacting both native flora and fauna. The use of fine-meshed nets presents a targeted and environmentally conscious approach to combat this issue. Research indicates that the deployment of fine-meshed nets can effectively serve as a physical barrier, preventing invasive species from encroaching upon vulnerable plant populations.

OHA emphasizes the critical need to adopt administrative rules as quickly as possible. These rules will provide needed clarification on the specific conditions and circumstances under which fine-meshed nets can be used. This ensures that the application is well-defined and aligns with ecological best practices. We would also like to encourage the committee consider providing funding so that—upon enactment—the department will be able to create and disseminate public awareness information that will ensure communities know this option will be available and how to do so appropriately.

By allowing the use of fine-meshed nets, the State of Hawai‘i is taking a proactive and scientifically informed approach to safeguarding our native plants from the detrimental effects of invasive species. OHA urges this body to consider the long-term ecological benefits that this legislation can bring to Hawaii and its unique biodiversity.



HB1928
RELATING TO HISTORIC PRESERVATION
House Committee on Water & Land

Accordingly, OHA urges the Committee to **PASS** HB2456. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.



LATE

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February 12, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HB 2546
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 2546, which allows for the use of fine meshed nets for the protection of plants against invasive species.

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

LATE

RE: In Support of House Bill 2546

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems:

I am Ian Ross, representing Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC), a Federally Qualified Health Center in West Oahu. We stand in **strong support** of HB2546, an important measure which moves us closer towards allowing the use of fine meshed nets to protect plants against invasive species, notably the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB).

Our commitment to preserving indigenous niu (coconuts) is evidenced by our establishment of Hawaii's largest coconut nursery in December 2023. This initiative safeguards a critical component of Hawaii's natural heritage but also embodies our proactive stance against ecological threats like CRB. The menace posed by CRB to our coconut palms cannot be overstated. It jeopardizes a key cultural and indigenous food system.

Jesse Mikasobe-Kealiinohomoku put it best when he said: "We have experienced the death of an entire Uluniu in the Coast of West in the point of Kalaeloa due to the displacement of the naturally fed irrigation system. Now the arrival of a serious invasive pest—coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB), *Oryctes rhinoceros*—has been exacerbating this existing coconut genetic erosion in the West coast of Oahu. Less than 10 years ago, since first detected on 23 November 2013 on Bellows Air Force Station Waimanalo and then in December in Joint Base Pearl Harbor—Hickam, an area that has become the epicenter of the invasion, CRB has since spread to devastate coconuts across West O'ahu threatening the existence of our respected well known Uluniu of Waianae including the Bay of Pokai. Especially, due to many reasons, the Cost of Waianae has become a hotspot for CRB. The biological clock that we joyfully tack down the growing of the coconut tree with the growth of fronds, now has turned into a brutal cycle of death, dropping youngest fronds down the growth."

HB2546 is crucial for empowering communities like ours to take concrete steps towards environmental preservation. By supporting this bill, you affirm the importance of local initiatives in combating invasive species, thereby enhancing our collective ability to maintain a safe and thriving ecosystem.

We urge your favorable consideration of HB2546.

Mahalo,

Ian Ross
Public Affairs Director
ianross@wcch.com

HB-2546

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 11:02:12 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.

Allows for the use of fine meshed nets for the protection of plants against invasive species.