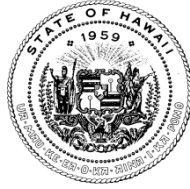


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



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

February 23, 2024
11:30 A.M.
State Capitol, Room 308 via Videoconference

**H.B. 2650, H.D. 1
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

House Committee on Finance

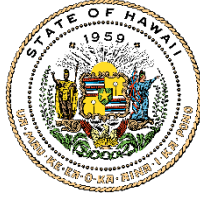
The Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) **supports** this bill that appropriates funds to the HDOT for the coordinated removal of albizia and other invasive trees that potentially threaten public roadways. These invasive trees affect areas within HDOT's right-of-way and operations when the invasive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

Friday, February 23, 2024
11:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 308 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2650 HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

House Bill 2650 House Draft 1 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.**

The Department recognizes the threat invasive *Albizia* poses to natural areas, neighborhoods, and infrastructure because of the large, brittle limbs that 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.

This situation is made worse as *Albizia* trees are one the faster growing trees in Hawai'i, growing up to 15 feet in one year. *Albizia's* 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 HISC is supportive of this bill which will help to address this invasive tree by incentivizing 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
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE

February 23, 2024
11:30 a.m.

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

MEASURE: H.B. No. 2650, HD1
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. (HD1)

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.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



House of Representatives
Committee on Finance
Friday, February 23, 2024
11:30 AM Conference Room 308
State Capitol

Testimony in Support of HB2650 HD1

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee,

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) is in support of **HB2650 HD1**, *Relating to Invasive Species*, which appropriates funds to the Department of Transportation for the coordinated removal of albizia and other invasive trees and requires matching funds from public utilities.

Albizia and other fast-growing trees have inherently weak limbs and trunks and many also have shallow roots. Combined, these characteristics put them at a high risk for failure during high-wind and storm events. Providing support to the Department of Transportation to address these invasive trees as public health and infrastructure hazards will protect people, vital transportation corridors, and utility infrastructure. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Aloha,

Christy Martin
CGAPS Program Manager

Stephanie Easley
CGAPS Legal Fellow



**Hawaiian
Electric**

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

**HB 2650, HD1
Relating to Invasive Species**

Friday, February 23, 2024
11:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

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

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jennifer Zelko and I am testifying on behalf of Hawaiian Electric in **strong support** of HB 2650, HD1, Relating to Invasive Species.

HB 2650, HD1 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, HD1 proposes to appropriate out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$1,000,000 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, HD1. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

HB-2650-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2024 9:06:21 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/23/2024 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patrick Chee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support funding for the Department of Transportation (DOT) to address albizia and other invasive trees. Albizia trees pose a significant threat to the safety and wellbeing of those traveling on roadways near where they grow. They grow tall fast and can suddenly drop large limbs which could pose a significant hazard which may result in injury or death on our roads. The DOT needs funding in order to control and remove these dangerous trees.

I urge you to support HB2650 and fund this bill.

Mahalo,
Patrick Chee