

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
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LATE

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

February 8, 2024
3:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

**S.B. 3013
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

Senate Committees on Transportation and Culture and the Arts and Agriculture 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.

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
February 8, 2024
3:00PM

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

MEASURE: S.B. No. 3013

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.

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.

JOSH GREEN
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



LATE



HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

1151 PUNCHBOWL ST, #325
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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

**COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT**

February 8, 2024; 3:00 PM Conference Room 224

**Testimony SENATE BILL 3013
RELATING TO THE HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL**

The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) provides the following comments on Senate Bill 3013 that 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

HISC supports this legislation to provide funding to DOT to remove Albizia trees. HISC agrees with the bill's language which states that Albizia trees are a threat to life, property, public roads, and utility infrastructure throughout Hawai'i. Albizia's large, brittle limbs are prone to fall or break in windy, rainy, or stormy weather conditions.

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 Hawaii, and HISC is supportive of this bill that will help to address this invasive tree by incentivizing matching funds from utility providers to remove trees that threatens public roadways and utility infrastructure rights of way on public and private land.

We greatly appreciate the work of legislators on this measure and the 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: 02/07/24

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

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

SUBJECT: In Support of SB3013 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 Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA), please support SB3013 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 SB3013 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.

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



**Hawaiian
Electric**

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

SB 3013

Relating to Invasive Species

Thursday, February 8, 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 SB 3013, Relating to Invasive Species.

SB 3013 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.

SB 3013 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 SB 3013. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

LATE

SB-3013

Submitted on: 2/8/2024 6:55:18 AM

Testimony for TCA on 2/8/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
josephine tanimoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. My name is Jojo Tanimoto and I have a farm in Panaewa.

i fully support this measure. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify