

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

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**DEAN M. MATSUKAWA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

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

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

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

**FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 2025**  
**1:00 PM**  
**CONFERENCE ROOM 224 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 1237, HD1**  
**RELATING TO BIOSECURITY**

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 1237, HD1 relating to biosecurity, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture (Department) for agricultural biosecurity and the prevention, detection, and control of invasive species in Maui County.

The Department supports this measure and offers comments. The Department is appreciative of funding to prevent and manage little fire ant and coconut rhinoceros beetle infestation in Maui County, including through the use of general professionals for biosecurity efforts. The Department suggests a change on page 3, line 21 to remove "little fire ant" and "coconut rhinoceros beetle" and replace with "pest". This will enable the Department to use allocated funds for any pest, such as coqui frogs, not just little fire ants and coconut rhinoceros beetles. The proposed change is as follows:

" . . . control [~~little fire ant and coconut rhinoceros beetle~~] pest infestations in Maui county. . ."



The Department is supportive of any effort that provides additional resources to manage pests throughout the State. While the Department is in support of this measure for Maui County, the Department believes that each county should also have additional resources for coqui control.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

JOSH GREEN  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



## HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

1151 PUNCHBOWL ST, #325  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

### VOTING MEMBERS

DAWN CHANG  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND & NATURAL  
RESOURCES

SHARON HURD  
HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

KATHLEEN HO, D.Env  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

PARWINDER GREWAL, Ph.D.  
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

MARY ALICE EVANS  
BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT &  
TOURISM

DEXTER KISHIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Chelsea Arnott, HISC Coordinator on behalf of  
HISC Co-Chair Sharon Hurd and Co-Chair Dawn N.S. Chang

### Senate Committee on AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Friday, March 14, 2025  
1:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 224 and Via Videoconference

### In consideration of HOUSE BILL 1237 HOUSE DRAFT 1 RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

House Bill 1237 House Draft 1 appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture (HDOA) for agricultural biosecurity and the prevention, detection, and control of invasive in Maui County. **The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (Council) supports this measure.**

HDOA is the only agency with regulatory authorities to inspect, quarantine, and carry out activities to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species. The establishment of positions to serve Molokai and Lanai will help to improve biosecurity. Both islands have been able to prevent the introduction and establishment of CRB, little fire ants, and coqui frogs through the efforts of the Island Invasive Species Committees and the Pulama Lanai Natural Resource Program.

Invasive species committees are our first line of defense against these threats. These volunteer-based, community-focused organizations are on the ground every day, actively monitoring, detecting, and removing invasive species. The establishment of a Lanai Invasive Species Subcommittee seems like a natural step to ensuring the island is safeguarded from new pests.

This measure is an important step to improving biosecurity for Maui County and recognizes that biosecurity cannot be done by one agency alone. It is also important that this funding is recurring to support the efforts established in this measure and do not lapse.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

**RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.**  
Mayor

**JOSIAH K. NISHITA**  
Managing Director



**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**  
COUNTY OF MAUI  
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793  
[www.mauicounty.gov](http://www.mauicounty.gov)

TO: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards III, Vice Chair  
Committee on Agriculture and Environment

FROM: Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor  
Rogerene Arce, Director of Agriculture

DATE: March 13, 2025

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF HB1237 HD1, RELATING TO BIOSECURITY**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this measure. The act appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for agricultural biosecurity and the prevention, detection, and control of invasive species in Maui County.

We **SUPPORT** this measure for the following reasons:

1. Our collective ability to execute the various measures to assure our biosecurity is foundational to life here in Hawai'i. Our county represents multiple islands that have varying needs to address the crisis of invasive species being spread across our community. Meeting these needs directly impact our communities ability to be sustainable and resilient, both ecologically and economically.
2. Increasing of HDOA's capacity to regulate, quarantine, and prevent the spread of invasive species to Molokai and Lāna'i with two full time Plant Quarantine Inspectors would go a long way in securing our native environment. Despite the relatively low import and interisland movement between these islands, having dedicated inspectors and quarantine infrastructure would decrease the vulnerability of an already decimated endemic ecology.
3. The establishment of a Lāna'i Invasive Species subcommittee is in alignment with the need for front line detection and response to biosecurity issues within our County. It increases our capacity to regulate and address the ongoing challenges of invasive species, while also increasing our situational awareness of what is happening "on the ground."

Mahalo for your consideration.

Council Chair  
Alice L. Lee

Vice-Chair  
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura

Presiding Officer Pro Tempore  
Tasha Kama

Councilmembers  
Tom Cook  
Gabe Johnson  
Tamara Paltin  
Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez  
Shane M. Sinenci  
Nohelani U'u-Hodgins



Director of Council Services  
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

Deputy Director of Council Services  
Richelle K. Kawasaki, Esq.

**COUNTY COUNCIL**  
COUNTY OF MAUI  
200 S. HIGH STREET  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793  
[www.MauiCounty.us](http://www.MauiCounty.us)

March 13, 2025

TO: The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

FROM: Alice L. Lee  
Council Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alice L. Lee", is written over the printed name and title.

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF MARCH 14, 2025; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1237, HD1, RELATING TO BIODIVERSITY**

I **support** this measure to appropriate funds for the prevention, detection, and control of invasive species in Maui County.

The Maui County Council has not had the opportunity to take a formal position on this measure. Therefore, I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I **support** this measure for the following reasons:

1. It would help to prevent and control potentially devastating infestations of coqui frog, little fire ant, and coconut rhinoceros beetle in Maui County.
2. Investments made now to detect and combat these invasive species will help prevent larger and more expensive problems in the future.
3. Providing funding will help the county's unique needs for agricultural biosecurity.

Thank you for your consideration.

ocs:proj:legis:25legis:25testimony:hb1237hd1\_paf25-007(39)\_mkm



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

March 14, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON HB 1237, HD1**  
**RELATING TO BIOSECURITY**

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
1:00 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, 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 1237, HD1**, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for agricultural biosecurity and the prevention, detection, and control of invasive species in Maui County. Strengthening biosecurity efforts in Maui County is critical to protecting local agriculture, ecosystems, and rural communities from the devastating impacts of invasive pests.

Moloka'i and Lāna'i currently lack a dedicated state agricultural inspector and quarantine facility, leaving these islands vulnerable to the introduction and spread of invasive species. Without early detection and rapid response measures in place, high-risk pathways such as the importation of plants, mulch, used vehicles, and farm equipment increase the likelihood of invasive pests establishing themselves. To date, pests such as the little fire ant, coconut rhinoceros beetle, and coqui frog have not been detected on Moloka'i or Lāna'i, making prevention efforts all the more urgent.

This measure provides funding for general biosecurity professionals for Moloka'i and Lāna'i to monitor cargo entering these islands. It also establishes a Lāna'i Invasive Species Committee as a sub-branch of the Maui Invasive Species Committee, ensuring that local resources are dedicated to invasive species prevention and response. Additionally, HB 1237, HD1 allocates resources to combat the growing threats of little fire ants, coconut rhinoceros beetles, and coqui frogs on Maui, where invasive species management efforts require sustained funding to protect agriculture, the environment, and local communities.

Hawai'i's biosecurity challenges are increasing due to rising global trade and tourism, climate change, and gaps in prevention infrastructure. The cost of controlling invasive species after they become established is significantly higher than the cost of prevention and early intervention. Protecting Moloka'i and Lāna'i from these threats will not only safeguard local agriculture but also preserve these islands as repositories for native species and agricultural biodiversity.

We urge the committee to pass HB 1237, HD1 to enhance agricultural biosecurity in Maui County and protect Hawai'i's farmers, ranchers, and natural resources from the ongoing threat of invasive species.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



The Senate  
Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
Friday, March 14, 2025  
1:00 pm Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
State Capitol

### Testimony in Support of HB1237 HD1

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) is **in support of HB1237 HD1, Relating to Biosecurity**. This bill provides appropriations: (1) to the Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) to prevent and control little fire ant (LFA) and coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) in Maui county, including through the hiring of general professionals for biosecurity efforts; (2) to the University of Hawaii Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit (UH-PCSU) for the Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC) or its Molokai subcommittee (MoMISC) to support education, early detection, response, and control efforts regarding coqui frogs, including by establishing a Lanai Invasive Species Committee as a sub-branch of MISC. HB1237 HD1 also authorizes HDOA to make grants to or enter into contracts with UH-PCSU for MISC or MoMISC.

Since its formation in 2001, MoMISC has effectively provided on-island capacity for pest detection and rapid response and MoMISC is honored to continue this work. However, the on-island presence of an HDOA official is necessary to conduct the official duties of HDOA. On Lanai, partnership work with Pūlama Lāna'i has been critical for pest detection and rapid response, but they cannot fulfill the regulatory duties of HDOA.

We hope that any Invasive Species Committee established for Lanai is able to address all high-impact invasive species and is not limited to coqui frog, as the current bill language seems to imply. This could be clarified by amending page 5, lines 1 through 3, to read as follows:

- (2) §        to establish a Lanai invasive species committee as a sub-branch of the Maui invasive species committee to prevent and respond to all high-impact invasive species on Lanai.

Mahalo for the opportunity to support the bill and for consideration of our testimony.

Aloha,

Christy Martin, CGAPS Program Manager



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "P.S. Easley".

Stephanie Easley, CGAPS Legal Fellow



March 12, 2025

Senate Committee on Agriculture & Environment  
Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 9:30 am  
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
State Capitol, Honolulu, HI

**Testimony Providing Comments on HB 1237, *Relating to Biosecurity and Invasive Species Management in Maui County***

Aloha e Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee on Agriculture & Environment,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on HB 1237 HD1, Relating to Biosecurity, which proposes to allocate funding for biosecurity and invasive species management in Maui County. Mahalo also for the increased emphasis on invasive species. The Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC) **supports this measure** and offers the following comments.

**Improved biosecurity for Molokai and Lānaʻi is warranted.** Section 2 of the bill proposes to appropriate funds for the Department of Agriculture to “prevent and control little fire ant and coconut rhinoceros beetle infestations” in Maui County, including through the hiring of general professionals for biosecurity efforts. MISC strongly supports increased capacity for agricultural inspection for Molokai and Lānaʻi, especially providing on-island staff for these two islands.

**Ongoing surveys for coconut rhinoceros beetles are critical for early detection.** To date, coconut rhinoceros beetles have only been detected once on Maui; more locations almost certainly exist. At present, the County of Maui, CRB Response, Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC) and Molokai Invasive Species Committee (MoMISC) are working collaboratively to continue early detection surveys on Maui and Molokai.

**Control of little fire ants is at a crossroads.** We respectfully request dedicated funds for work on little fire ants on Maui. MISC has led the efforts for early detection, rapid response, and eradication on Maui for more than a decade. The county-based Response plan for little fire ants developed under the statewide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among HDOA, Department of Land and Natural Resources, and the University of Hawaii lists MISC as the lead agency for LFA control operations, with the exception of nurseries. Our team is delimiting new infestations, conducting ground and aerial treatments at active sites, and monitoring locations where the ants are no longer detected. Our early detection specialist identifies the ant species present in each sample collected—a level of detail that will help prevent the establishment of

other harmful species such as the red imported fire ant. MISC's LFA detector dog team was trained in Australia last year and Freddie's nose is hard at work on Maui, helping to confirm the presence or absence of LFA at new sites.

Our efforts have been successful to date, even while tackling infestations in extremely complex environments. In collaboration with the Hawai'i Ant Lab and Department of Agriculture, an innovative aerial control strategy has reduced LFA in a 175-acre treatment zone in Nāhiku to below-detectable levels. Confirmation of success required intense ground surveys in dense vegetation crisscrossed by streams and waterfalls. Last month, MISC conducted the first aerial treatment across four acres at a new north shore infestation using a drone. These successes have been possible because of funding through the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council, along with exceptional support from the County of Maui. Unfortunately, like the other islands, Maui is seeing a surge of new LFA infestations, from Kīpahulu to Napili; eight new sites were discovered in just the last 14 months. MISC needs to double staff capacity just to keep up with current locations, including support for a full-time team based in Hāna to address East Maui locations.

**Increased support for coqui frogs is warranted:** Section 3 proposes to allocate funding to MISC, as a project of the University of Hawai'i Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit, to combat the spread of coqui frogs. The Maui County portion of the MOU Response plan for coqui frogs identifies MISC as the lead entity. To date, MISC has eradicated nearly 30 breeding populations, suppressed coqui in portions of Ha'ikū, and continues to respond to outlier coqui frogs that occur across the island. MISC manages a community control program that is helping residents take back their quiet nights. Much work remains to be done, but consistent, systematic treatment is required for success. MISC supports the opportunity to expand on this vital work.

**Establishment of a Lāna'i Subcommittee would bolster biosecurity efforts on Lāna'i:** MISC previously conducted invasive species operations on Lāna'i and would be pleased to collaborate with Pūlama Lāna'i and the Lāna'i community to establish a Lāna'i subcommittee.

**Clarity of responsibilities is needed.** Section 2 does not specify who will lead the efforts to prevent and control little fire ants in Maui County. Additionally, as currently drafted, the bill would limit funding for a Lāna'i subcommittee to working on coqui frogs, which are not known to be present on the island. We respectfully request that funding for little fire ants be directed to the Maui Invasive Species Committee and that funding for a Lāna'i subcommittee support work on relevant invasive species. MISC offers the following proposed amendments:

SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for the department of agriculture to prevent and control ~~little fire ant and coconut~~ rhinoceros beetle infestations in Maui county, including through the hiring of general professionals for biosecurity efforts. The sums appropriated shall be expended by the department of agriculture for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 3. (a) There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$        or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 to combat the spread of coqui frogs, little fire ants, and other invasive species in Maui county; provided that the funding shall be allocated in the following manner:

(1) \$        to the university of Hawaii Pacific cooperative studies unit for the Maui invasive species committee or its Molokai subcommittees to support education, early detection, response, and control efforts regarding coqui frogs, little fire ants, and other invasive species; provided further that this funding may include providing equipment and supplies to residents to treat coqui frog infestations on their properties; and

(2) \$        to establish a Lanai invasive species committee as a sub-branch of the Maui invasive species committee for the detection and control of invasive species on Lanai.

(b) The department of agriculture may make grants to or enter into contracts with the university of Hawaii Pacific cooperative studies unit for the Maui invasive species committee or its Molokai subcommittees to accomplish the purposes of this section.

The proposed amendments would provide dedicated funding for work on little fire ants and coqui frogs on Maui, and support the establishment of a Lānaʻi subcommittee with the flexibility to identify and work on the highest-priority pest species for the island.

MISC and MoMISC remain committed to working closely with our partners on invasive species threats to our native biodiversity, live-giving waters, local agriculture, and quality of life.

Mahalo for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Teya M. Penniman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Teya M. Penniman  
Special Projects Director  
Maui Invasive Species Committee

**HB-1237-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2025 12:57:47 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/14/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lori Buchanan	Testifying for MoMISC	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

In support of HB1237



**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM**

**‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII**

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
Friday, March 14, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.

By

Philip Williams

Acting Dean

College of Natural Sciences

And

Michael Bruno, Provost

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

## HB 1237 HD1 – RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i (UH) supports the intent of HB 1237 HD1 and offers the following comments on this measure.

As currently written, the measure does not designate a lead entity responsible for preventing and controlling little fire ants (LFA) in Maui County. For over a decade, the Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC) has been at the forefront of early detection, rapid response, and eradication efforts for LFA on Maui. Under the county-based response plan established through the statewide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA), the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), and UH, MISC serves as the lead agency for LFA control operations, with the exception of nurseries. MISC plays a critical role in identifying new infestations, conducting both ground and aerial treatments, and monitoring previously treated areas to ensure eradication success. Given its expertise and proven track record, MISC is well-positioned to continue this vital work.

Additionally, UH notes the ongoing challenges MISC faces due to current funding mechanisms. Much of MISC's critical work is conducted in partnership with the UH Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit (PCSU), and the existing funding structure presents limitations on efficiency and long-term planning.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.



Mālama  
Learning  
Center

P.O. Box 1662  
Honolulu, HI 96806

*Mālama Learning Center is a non-profit organization based in West Oahu. Our mission is to inspire communities to care for Hawai'i by perpetuating conservation, culture, and sustainability through education.*

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB1237 HD1

Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Hearing Date: March 14, 2025 at 1:00 pm  
Conference Room 224 & Via Videoconference  
State Capitol 415 South Beretania Street

Aloha Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee,

Aloha Kākou. My name is Pauline Sato and I serve as the Executive Director of the Mālama Learning Center, a private, non-profit environmental education organization. I am submitting written testimony in strong support of HB 1237 HD1, which aims to appropriate funds to the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) for agricultural biosecurity and the prevention, detection, and control of invasive species in Maui County.

Mālama Learning Center is based in leeward O'ahu and while our organization conducts most of its educational and conservation programming there, we have also been supporting efforts on the island of Moloka'i to educate the community about invasive species like Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle and Little Fire Ant. From real life experience, we see the impact that these pests have on our environment and communities. We know all too well that prevention is the best and most cost-effective solution. It is imperative to prevent these invasive species and others from infesting islands like Moloka'i and Lāna'i. This bill provides critical support for invasive species management on Moloka'i and Lāna'i by creating dedicated HDOA positions and securing the funding required for their work.

I am born and raised in Hawai'i and have dedicated my career to conservation because I love our lands and waters to no end. Sadly, I see how our environment has been degraded over time due to the influx and spread of invasive species. We must act proactively now. These critical steps will support Maui County in preventing invasive species spread, averting significant financial burdens and protecting the well-being and daily lives of its residents.

I urge your respective committees to pass this bill and thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha,



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State President

Anabella Bruch  
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Andrea Drayer  
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Fawn Helekahi-Burns  
Hāna, Maui

Mason Scharer  
Haleakalā, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros  
Mauna Kahālāwai,  
Maui

Kaipo Kekona  
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy  
Moloka'i

Negus Manna  
Lāna'i

India Clark  
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman  
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Ted Radovich  
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura  
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska  
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Senate Agriculture and Environment Committee,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFU supports HB1237.**

HB1237 HD1 is a critical step in strengthening biosecurity in Maui County by funding efforts to prevent, detect, and control invasive species such as little fire ants, coconut rhinoceros beetles, and coqui frogs. However, to be truly effective, funding must be directed to the organizations best equipped for on-the-ground response and should be sustained over multiple years.

Currently, the bill allocates funds to the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA), which plays an important role in biosecurity but does not conduct localized eradication efforts. The Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC) and the Molokai Invasive Species Committee (MoMISC) are the primary entities carrying out rapid response and control measures in Maui County. Direct funding to these committees, as well as the establishment of a Lanai Invasive Species Committee, will ensure resources are used efficiently for early detection, rapid response, and long-term containment efforts.

Invasive species management requires ongoing monitoring and intervention. A one-time appropriation is insufficient, as lapses in funding can lead to resurgence and higher long-term costs. While the Legislature cannot mandate future appropriations, recognizing the need for multi-year funding and prioritizing continued investment will provide stability for these efforts.

**We respectfully urge the Legislature to amend HB1237 HD1 to specify direct funding to MISC, MoMISC, and the Lanai Invasive Species Committee and to emphasize the importance of sustained funding to protect Hawai'i's agriculture, ecosystems, and rural communities.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin  
Advocacy Director  
Hawai'i Farmers Union





# MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT  
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 224  
Friday, March 14, 2025, 1:00 P.M.

Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senator Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair  
Members of the committee on Agriculture and Environment

## SUPPORT HB1237 HD1 RELATING TO BIOSECURITY

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **SUPPORTS HB1237 HD1**, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture for agricultural biosecurity and the prevention, detection, and control of invasive species in Maui County.

The Chamber notes that as an island state, Hawaii has the unique advantage of being able to prevent the spread of invasive species through isolation, allowing non-infected islands to serve as critical repositories for native plants and species threatened by infestations elsewhere. This proactive approach to biosecurity will help safeguard Hawaii's environment, economy, and culture.

We support this initiative to address critical gaps in Maui county's agricultural biosecurity and the prevention, detection, and control of invasive species in Maui County by appropriating funds for these purposes.

For these reasons, we strongly **SUPPORT HB1237 HD1** and respectfully request its passage.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap  
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.

**HB-1237-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 10:42:18 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/14/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!

**HB-1237-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2025 7:57:22 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/14/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Benton Keali'i Pang, Ph.D., and I am writing in strong support of HB1237, which provides essential funding for biosecurity and invasive species management in Maui County. With my 35 years of experience working on conservation and invasive species issues in Hawai'i, I have seen firsthand the devastating impact that invasive species have on our ecosystems, agriculture, and communities.

This bill is critical because it:

- Supports new HDOA positions for Molokai and Lāna'i, increasing on-island capacity to detect and respond to invasive species before they spread. These islands need dedicated inspectors who understand the local challenges and can take swift action.
- Strengthens MISC's invasive species response by providing much-needed funding to expand their little fire ant (LFA) control efforts. The recent increase in new LFA detections on Maui—eight new sites in the last 14 months—highlights the urgent need for additional resources.
- Enhances coqui frog control efforts, which have been instrumental in helping communities reclaim quiet nights. Increased and sustained funding will allow MISC to build upon its successful community control program and continue combatting this disruptive species.
- Advances innovative aerial control methods for LFA, which are showing promise in addressing infestations in difficult-to-reach areas. This funding will allow for the expansion of these critical efforts.
- Clarifies the scope of the Lāna'i Subcommittee, ensuring it can address multiple invasive species beyond just coqui frogs. Given the increasing threats to Lāna'i's ecosystems, this flexibility is essential.

I have personally witnessed the impact of invasive species on Hawai'i's native biodiversity, agriculture, and communities. Without adequate resources and staffing, we risk losing ground in the fight against these threats. This bill will provide the necessary support to bolster biosecurity and invasive species management in Maui County, protecting both the environment and the livelihoods of local residents.

I respectfully urge you to support HB1237 and ensure that Maui County has the resources needed to combat invasive species effectively.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,  
Benton Keali'i Pang, Ph.D.

**HB-1237-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2025 8:04:55 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/14/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Magenheim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

The maui invasive species committee is extremely important organization that has helped keep the problems of environmental threats at bay . Please continue to fund this organization as it keeps maui safe and is at the forefront of a real battle to protect our environment.

i lived in haiku for 22 years and the problem of invasive species is growing!

without MISC we are in real trouble , with them we stand a chance

thank you

David Magenheim

**HB-1237-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2025 8:08:50 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/14/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lana Wilkinson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

Over the past few years the peace and quiet in our neighborhood has been severely diminished due to coqui frogs. Living in Hawaii we leave window open, no AC, and at night it becomes difficult to fall asleep and stay asleep. As a physician and parent I know the long term effects of poor sleep. This bill is extremely important to allow for additional resources to eliminate the frogs. Our health and well being depend on it. Aloha

**HB-1237-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2025 8:53:39 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/14/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shaun Fleming	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

PLEASE SUPPORT BILL HB1237 HD1. It is not too late to save our island from the invasive species we are now dealing with. It pays to invest funds into that now instead of later when it is too late! The damage will become irreversible at some point soon. This will impact agriculture, tourism and the livelihood of our people. It would be extremely foolish to be short sighted and ignore the impacts of invasive species. PLEASE act now while you can.

Mahalo !

**HB-1237-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2025 8:57:43 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/14/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Hoskin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

My name is Patricia Hoskin. I have lived in Maui full time since 2009. I have experienced the noise of the frogs in 2010, when I stayed on the big island to attend Merry Monarch festival. The frogs are very disruptive and we need to keep them from advancing on maui. Also we need to protect food supplies, pets , and humans from the little fire ants. Please increase funding. Thank you, pat



**HB-1237-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2025 9:17:05 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/14/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Fleming	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this bill, we need more consistent funding and jobs working to minimize the effects of invasive species in the state, which effect EVERYTHING!

Mahalo, James Fleming

**HB-1237-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2025 9:40:36 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/14/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alicia Jacobson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To Whom It May Concern,

Please give this bill positive consideration as an important measure to assist communities in eradicating the invasive coqui frog. We need as much human power to detect and spray to keep the coqui population at bay.

Currently, the noise produced by these frogs is disruptive to our communities. Please vote to provide more resources to assist with coqui frog reduction/prevention efforts.

**HB-1237-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2025 10:09:03 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/14/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Greg Kahn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee members,

My name is Greg Kahn and I support HB1237.

As a Molokai resident living in Maui County, I see the need for funding biosecurity in Maui County as a high priority.. Our island and county have been experieincing new and increasing infestations of invasive species such as coqui frogs, fire ants, and coconut rhinoceros beetles. HB1237 will create new positions for stemming this tide of invasive species.

Mahalo

Greg Kahn, Molokai

**HB-1237-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2025 2:18:48 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/14/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Masako Cordray	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

Aloha members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

I am Masako Cordray. I have been a full time farmer in Hamakualoa Maui for more than 50 years. I am writing in support of HB1237 and its funding for the essential work of MISC to protect Maui from invasive species. When I tested and found LFA on hapu'u logs I had just bought I immediately alerted MISC. Their rapid response resulted in protecting my farm, tracing the source to the nursery and to other nurseries including on Oahu and initiating a successful treatment program. This one instance demonstrates the skill, knowledge and commitment of MISC. Their wide ranging work deserves our gratitude and full support. Increasing infestations of LFA, CRB and Coqui frogs highlight the danger to our beloved islands.

Mahalo, Masako Cordray

**HB-1237-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2025 12:31:43 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/14/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Adam Knox	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

This Bill is critical to the future of Hawai‘i. Many of the organizations working on these issues perform small miracles with the relatively little resources they have, MISC being one of them. Further empowering those agencies best tasked with this role is paramount to avoid irreparable economic and/or ecological catastrophe. The horticulture industry also needs to step up their efforts exponentially and be held accountable in order to keep these agencies from needing to swim against the current of careless commercial movement of invasive species between the islands. I support the passage of this Bill.

**HB-1237-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2025 9:49:13 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/14/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joel Roth	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I am writing in regard to HB 1237 on funding biosecurity measures in Hawaii.

The little fire ant (LFA) represents a huge danger to our well-being on Maui, and its control is vital at this critical juncture, when LFA are spreading, with tens of new colonies being discovered.

Heroic efforts by MISC working with other state and local agencies over the past years have gotten the largest infestation in Nahiku under control but more efforts are needed to detect the presence of satellite colonies and to remove them while they are still possible to eradicate.

Little fire ants have an extremely painful bite, and make areas uninhabitable by people and animals.

Maui is a small island; we must act to prevent losing control to this invasive and destructive pest.

Please support the passing of HB 1237 to provide resources to this critical effort to protect our island ecosystem from a pest that will otherwise force people from their lands.

Mahalo

## **Testimony for HB1237**

**Dagmar de Zwart**  
**172 Piialii Place**  
**Haiku Makai Subdivision Maui**  
**Haiku, HI 96708**  
[dagmar.oceans@gmail.com](mailto:dagmar.oceans@gmail.com)  
**+1-808-264-2840**

To whom it may concern – Control Coqui frog population on Maui in  
Haiku Makai Subdivision

We are living in the far end of Haiku Makai Subdivision on Maui.  
Our full length of the property is at the site of Maliko Gulch. We had  
tremendous success with the help of the MISC crew in using citric acid  
in the past years. Through the effective use of citric acid, we have  
significantly reduced the number of coqui frogs, mitigating the risks  
they pose to our local ecosystem and the noise level on our property  
and overall, in our subdivision.

MISC installation of coqui fencing in part of the subdivision is very  
successful for our bordering neighbors as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely, Dagmar de Zwart





**HB-1237-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2025 12:39:33 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/14/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Suzanne Fields	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

As a 35 year resident of Haiku, Maui, I IMPLORE you to support this legislation and ensure the required funding is available to address these critical issues.

About 5 years ago, 1 coqui frog was hand caught on my property. When the MISC Coqui Crew was fully staffed (though never enough staff), they helped to reduce and manage the coqui infestation growing on and around my property. With the Coqui Crew short staffed for over 6 months (since late Summer 2024), the exponential volume of coqui on my property has become intolerable. I did what I could to manage my property with citric acid but the scope of the problem for me and my neighbors is TOO MUCH. Sadly, it is sounding like the Big Island - I need to close my windows and doors in the evening due to the deafening coqui voices.

**We desperately need MISC to support our communities and the State of Hawaii to eliminate, reduce, and manage ALL invasive species throughout our islands.**

**PLEASE SUPPORT new HDOA positions for Molokai and Lanai and provide increased funding for MISC's invasive species work on MAUI!!!.**

- New HDOA positions for Molokai and Lanai will increase capacity on-island.
- Molokai and Lānaʻi should have dedicated inspectors on-island.
- New LFA infestations are increasing dramatically on Maui, with eight new sites detected in the past 14 months. MISC leads response efforts in Maui County.
- MISC has led efforts on LFA control on Maui for more than a decade but needs to double staff capacity and establish a full-time team in Hāna to address outbreaks in East Maui.
- Innovative aerial control methods for little fire ants are showing success.
- Additional funding is needed to combat coqui frogs.
- The community control program is helping residents reclaim quiet nights, but increased, sustained funding is essential.
- The bill should clarify that a Lānaʻi Subcommittee can work on multiple species, not just coqui frogs
- Funding allocated to MISC should support work on LFA as well as coqui frogs.

It is shameful that a state that should be fully invested in Agriculture spends less than 1% of the State Budget on this department.

SUPPORT these invasive species efforts and INCREASE THE DEPARTMENT OF AG budget.

Suzanne Fields

Haiku, Maui

**HB-1237-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2025 12:08:27 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/14/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Merrill Ranken	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

Mahalo fro the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB1237. I am a STEAM teacher in the DOE from Waihe'e, Maui. My husband and I also own a parcel in Nahiku, east Maui. Both Waihe'e Valley and the land we steward in the country have been infested with Little Fire Ant (LFA) at times over the past few years. If Maui Invasive Species Committee (MISC) is not robustly funded our way of life in rural Maui would not be possible. We would not be able to enjoy hiking, swimming in the streams, having our pets and grandchildren wander freely in our yard or growing food such as banana and breadfruit. Private landowners and renters can not be counted on to monitor and treat for LFA in the systematic and effective way that MISC has done over the years. Just look at the recent closing of Hau'ula Park due to LFA for a "closer to home" example of the constant threat this species poses. The Federal government is not going to protect the state of Hawai'i. We must protect each other.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Merrill Ranken

**HB-1237-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/13/2025 3:43:36 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/14/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Becky Erickson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

## Comments:

I live in an area with Coqui Frogs and our neighborhood has been working hard for several years to keep them from spreading, but we cannot do this without more help from MISC. Residents in unaffected areas don't realize how loud and invasive the frogs are. The frogs will eventually spread to all of Maui if MISC does not receive more funding to help battle the frogs. Also the Little Fire Ants and Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle are a serious danger to our communities and we need additional help from MISC to battle these as well.

I humbly ask that you support this bill and approve addtitonal funding for Maui Invasive Species to protect us from these invaders.

I have lived on Maui for 45 years and fear for the environmental future of the island.

Thank you.

Maui has had 28 incursions of little fire ants. MISC has been the lead entity for delimitation, treatment, and monitoring for more 90% of those sites. In the last 14 months, eight new locations were discovered. MISC needs more resources to prevent little fire ants from becoming unstoppable.

The County of Maui has been a leader among the other Counties in supporting work on invasive species, including on little fire ants and coqui frogs. This bill would provide significant State resources to support that work. The amounts initially proposed were \$3 million for inspection / control work on little fire ant and coconut rhinoceros beetles, \$2 million for coqui frogs, and \$250,000 for the creation of a Lānaʻi Invasive Species Committee.

- New HDOA positions for Molokai and Lanai will increase capacity on-island.
- Molokai and Lānaʻi should have dedicated inspectors on-island.
- New LFA infestations are increasing dramatically on Maui, with eight new sites detected in the past 14 months. MISC leads response efforts in Maui County.
- MISC has led efforts on LFA control on Maui for more than a decade but needs to double staff capacity and establish a full-time team in Hāna to address outbreaks in East Maui.
- Innovative aerial control methods for little fire ants are showing success.
- Additional funding is needed to combat coqui frogs.
- The community control program is helping residents reclaim quiet nights, but increased, sustained funding is essential.
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- Funding allocated to MISC should support work on LFA as well as coqui frogs.