



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 643, H.D. 1, RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

DATE: Friday, February 7, 2025 **TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

LOCATION: University of Hawaii at Manoa, Bachman Hall
Board of Regents Conference Room 106
2444 Dole Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Candace J. Park, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Garrett and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

This bill requires the University of Hawai'i to incorporate five short-term management initiatives for the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Response Program and appropriates funds for this purpose. One of the management initiatives requires the University of Hawaii to award grants of public money to subsidize canopy treatments for residential palm owners.

Article X, section 6, of the Hawai'i Constitution gives the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i "exclusive jurisdiction over the internal structure, management, and operation of the university." Section 6 further provides: "This section shall not limit the power of the legislature to enact laws of statewide concern. The legislature shall have the exclusive jurisdiction to identify laws of statewide concern." We recommend an amendment that adds a statement identifying this bill as a law of statewide concern.

Article VII, section 4, of the Hawai'i Constitution requires that "no grant of public money or property shall be made except pursuant to standards provided by law." We recommend that this bill be amended to insert appropriate standards. Examples of

existing statutes that provide standards for agencies to issue grants are part II of chapter 9 and sections 10-17, 210D-11, and 383-128, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

We have attached draft standards to this testimony as a sample to work from. These standards could be inserted on page 4, line 11, as a new section 3, with subsequent sections appropriately renumbered.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

POSSIBLE STANDARDS FOR THE GRANTS IN THIS BILL

SECTION 3. Applications for grants subsidizing canopy treatment for residential palm owners shall be made to the university of Hawaii. At a minimum, the applicant shall:

- (1) Be licensed or accredited, in accordance with federal, state, or county statutes, rules, or ordinances, to conduct the activities or provide the services for which a grant is awarded;
- (2) Provide a detailed plan outlining the scope, objectives, and projected impact of the project or projects and a clear breakdown of how grant funds will be utilized;
- (3) Agree to use state funds exclusively for the purposes of these programs;
- (4) Indicate capability to properly use the grant for the purpose of these grant programs. [Specific applicant qualifications should be described for the different types of grants.];
- (5) Comply with all applicable federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, creed, sex, age, sexual orientation, disability, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law;
- (6) Agree not to use state funds for purposes of entertainment or perquisites;
- (7) Comply with other requirements as the university of Hawaii may prescribe;
- (8) Comply with all applicable federal, state, and county statutes, rules, and ordinances;
- (9) Agree to indemnify and save harmless the State of Hawaii and its officers, agents, and employees from and against any and all claims arising out of or resulting from activities carried out or projects undertaken with funds provided hereunder and procure

sufficient insurance to provide this indemnification if requested to do so by the university of Hawaii; and

- (10) Agree to make available to the university of Hawaii all records the applicant may have relating to the grant, to allow state agencies to monitor the applicant's compliance with this section.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
February 7, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

By

Parwinder Grewal, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 643 HD1 – RELATED TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM

Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the intent of HB 643 HD1 relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) Program which establishes short-term management initiatives for a CRB response with appropriations for activities and positions.

We support the intent of this bill and respectively offer the following comments. The landscape-altering impact of CRB is being realized across many neighborhoods on O'ahu and Kaua'i. As populations build on these islands, there is an increased threat of spread to Lāna'i, Moloka'i, and Ni'ihau, as well as reintroductions to Maui and Hawai'i Island. The Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Response (CRBHawaii.org), a federally-funded emergency response program based in the University of Hawai'i Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (UHM-CTAHR), has been working to suppress and eradicate CRB subpopulations since 2014. The status of future federal funding to support this program is unclear and the current Cooperative Agreements with the U.S. Department of Agriculture for canine detection and operational response terminate in June and August 2025, respectively.

UHM-CTAHR views this bill as an important effort to develop State support for the CRB Response program. One amendment is suggested for Section 3 (5), to reinstate the language from HB 643 which allocates unspecified funds for subsidizing fumigation in addition to conducting research with an emphasis on biocontrol. The use of the only fumigant, sulfuryl fluoride, has very recently been discontinued pending further evaluation. There are no current alternatives for fumigation of high-risk materials traveling between islands. Researchers at UHM-CTAHR are collaborating with the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) and a local pest control company to evaluate an alternative fumigant in February 2025. UHM-CTAHR would like to clarify that if subsidizing fumigation is reinstated, we can only support reinstating fumigation in

Section 3 (5) when an effective fumigant is approved by the HDOA Plant Quarantine Branch.

We support the intent of HB 643 HD1 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Budget. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAI'I | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
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

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FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

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BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
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CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
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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
HIGHER EDUCATION
Friday, February 7, 2025
2:00 PM

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, Bachman Hall
Board of Regents Conference Room 106

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 643, HOUSE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE

House Bill 643 establishes short-term management initiatives for the coconut rhinoceros beetle response program and appropriates funds for activities and positions related to coconut rhinoceros beetle infestation control. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure.**

The coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) is a significant pest across the Pacific Region. The insect's primary host is the coconut palm (*Cocos nucifera*), which provides soil stabilization and coastal erosion control and is a culturally important component of our community forests in Hawaii. However, these beetles can also attack native forest species. Damage and mortality have been observed among our native Hawaiian palms, loulou (*Pritchardia* spp.), of which many species are threatened or endangered. The beetles can also attack hala (*Pandanus tectorius*), which is an essential component of native lowland wet forests and was used to weave sails for the original Hawaiian voyaging canoes.

First detected in 2013, CRB had been contained to O'ahu for many years but was found established on Kaua'i in 2023. It was recently detected in very low levels on Maui and Hawai'i Islands where eradication is still feasible. The UH CRB Response Team which is the lead for CRB monitoring, response, research, and outreach statewide was originally funded by the USDA APHIS with the goal of eradication for the State. Since statewide eradication is no longer feasible, federal funding for the UH's response is now in jeopardy.

Islands without established CRB populations are working closely with UH on prevention, survey, and rapid response. However, management of this destructive pest is also desperately needed on O‘ahu and Kaua‘i to mitigate impacts to natural resources, agricultural producers, tourism, and our community.

This measure would provide urgently needed State support to the UH CRB Response Team to continue and expand their work to help mitigate impacts and manage CRB. The team also leads in investigating potential landscape-level tools like biological control that have proven effective on other Pacific Islands and will be necessary to bring this pest under control.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of 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

House Committee on AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

9:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 325 and Via Videoconference

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

In consideration of HOUSE BILL 643 RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE

House Bill 643 seeks to address potential funding gaps that support the monitoring, control, outreach, and research for Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle that is carried out by the University of Hawaii's CRB Response Team. **The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (Council) supports this measure.**

The CRB Response Team is primarily funded by USDA APHIS. Funding started after the first detection in 2013 and is now in jeopardy since the intended goal of that funding was statewide eradication and that is no longer feasible with the current control tools. Currently USDA funding supports 86% of the UH CRB Response team which has taken the lead on monitoring, control, research, and outreach for the state but does work closely with state agencies, the counties, and partner organizations. The team consists of experienced researchers, data and operations managers, an outreach team, and staff for monitoring and response efforts.

Much progress has been made in the last 10 years on finding better chemicals to treat and protect trees, establishing best management practices for green waste and mulch management, better monitoring tools like detector dogs and camera traps, and more aware and engaged communities. Progress continues with this team as now the lead researcher is working on the SOP and permits to import potential biocontrol agent that could offer landscape level management. Biocontrol agents have been released on other Pacific Islands for CRB with positive results.

The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council was formed in 2003 by Hawaii Revised Statute 194 with the special purpose of providing policy level coordination and planning for the control and eradication of harmful invasive species. The Council is co-chaired by the

directors of the Departments of Land and Natural Resources and the Agriculture, and has leadership representation from the departments of Health, Business and Economic Development, Transportation, and University of Hawaii. HISC provided funding in the early response for CRB and continues to secure other funding sources to support the CRB Response Team including Department of Defense and USDA Forest Service funding.

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

COUNTY COUNCIL

Mel Rapozo, Chair
KipuKai Kualii, Vice Chair
Addison Bulosan
Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Felicia Cowden
Fern Holland
Arryl Kaneshiro



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Telephone: (808) 241-4188
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Email: cokcouncil@kauai.gov

Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii 96766

February 5, 2025

**TESTIMONY OF FERN HOLLAND
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON**

**HB 643, HD 1, RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE
PROGRAM**

House Committee on Higher Education
Friday, February 7, 2025
2:00 p.m.

University of Hawaii at Manoa, Bachman Hall
Board of Regents Conference Room 106
2444 Dole Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822
Via Videoconference

Dear Chair Garrett and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of HB 643, HD 1, Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) Program. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kauai County Council.

I greatly appreciate the amendments made to the original version of the Bill.

Kauai is facing a growing infestation of CRB and is in a critical time where we have gone from detection to an explosion in populations. Kauai may still be in the window of eradication, and we need all the support we can get to accomplish this. This invasive species is one of the largest invasive threats we may have ever faced in recent years. This species threatens many of our core agricultural crops and important cultural sites and plant species (such as our endemic Loulu, *Pritchardia*, palms and Hala, *Pandanas*) as well as our renowned and historical groves along the Royal Coconut Coast and the overall landscape look and tropical visual image of Kauai and Hawaii.

It is hard to even begin to calculate the economic cost that CRB will have on Kauai. We must work collaboratively to be all in on eradication efforts and respond with unprecedented biosecurity actions.

Please do everything you can to fast-track action and response, education and funding for the management and, wherever possible, eradication of CRB.

We need to invest in both immediate responses and eradication efforts and long-term biological control options.

I urge you to support HB 643, HD 1 and help provide as much support as possible to address the CRB crisis in every way possible.

Chair Garrett and Members of the Committee
Re: HB 643, HD 1, Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program
February 5, 2025
Page 2

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 643, HD 1. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to cokcouncil@kauai.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "F. Holland", written in a cursive style.

FERN HOLLAND
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

AAO:mn

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
NALANI BRUN, DIRECTOR



DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR
REIKO MATSUYAMA, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Testimony of Nalani Kaaui Brun
Director, Office of Economic Development- County of Kaua'i

Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
February 7, 2025, at 2:00 PM
UH Board of Regents Conference Room 106 & Via Videoconference



In consideration of
House Bill HB643 HD1
Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program

Honorable Chair Kahaloa, Vice-Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB643 HD1. The Office of Economic Development sincerely appreciates the committee's responsiveness in amending the bill to include Kaua'i in response team deployments, drone monitoring, and other critical measures. These updates reflect a strong commitment to statewide collaboration in managing this devastating pest.

As written, this bill provides vital support for mitigation, containment, and long-term biocontrol research. However, to ensure resources are effectively utilized, we respectfully request an amendment to explicitly ensure equitable distribution of funds based on infestation severity, risk level, and specific needs on each island, including Kaua'i. Additionally, we urge the committee to consider fast-tracking response efforts for Kaua'i to prevent further damage to our environment, economy, and cultural resources.

Requested Amendment to Section 3 – Equitable Funding and Expedited Action for Kaua'i

"Funds allocated under this Act shall be distributed equitably across all counties based on the severity of infestation, risk factors, and resource needs, ensuring that Kaua'i County and all affected islands receive adequate support for training, treatments, inspections, and response team deployment. Resource distribution should be guided by scientific data and community needs, with priority given to areas where early intervention can prevent widespread economic and ecological damage. Efforts to address infestations on Kaua'i should be considered for expedited implementation to protect its environment, economy, and cultural resources from further degradation."

We appreciate the importance of ensuring funding is allocated where it will have the greatest impact. Some communities, like Kaua'i County, face a disproportionate burden from invasive species due to their landscape and economic reliance on natural resources. Equitable funding ensures resources are directed to high-risk areas where early action can most effectively prevent costly, large-scale infestations. Investing in containment now saves exponentially more in long-term eradication costs, reducing future burdens on both public and private landowners while protecting rural and agricultural economies.

- Kaua'i already has confirmed CRB infestations, requiring immediate attention to prevent further spread.

- Fair resource allocation ensures that funds reach the areas most in need, rather than being distributed evenly without consideration of infestation risk or severity.
- Fast-tracking mitigation efforts on Kauaʻi could prevent a long-term crisis, reducing costs and protecting the agricultural and tourism industries.
- Delaying intervention increases the risk of exponential CRB population growth, making future eradication efforts significantly more challenging and expensive.

We fully support this bill and deeply appreciate the amendments made to ensure Kauaʻi is included in response efforts. By incorporating clear language ensuring equitable funding distribution and prioritizing expedited action for Kauaʻi, we can strengthen the effectiveness of Hawaiʻi's CRB response and safeguard our state's natural and economic resources.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.



Officers

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State President

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India Clark
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Ted Radovich
Waimanalo, Oahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, Oahu

Natalie Urminska
Kauai

Aloha Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the House Higher Education Committee,

The Hawaii 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 HB643.**

The Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) poses a significant threat to Hawaii's agricultural landscape, particularly its coconut and palm populations. HB643, which focuses on establishing short-term management initiatives for the CRB response program, is an essential measure for protecting our farms and natural resources from this invasive species. By allocating funds for activities related to CRB control, this bill enables the implementation of immediate actions to manage and mitigate the impact of these pests. This proactive approach not only safeguards the livelihoods of local farmers but also helps preserve the unique biodiversity of our islands.

Supporting HB643 means ensuring that Hawaii's agricultural sector remains robust and resilient in the face of invasive threats. The legislation promotes initiatives that focus on both containment and long-term eradication strategies, laying a foundation for comprehensive management of the CRB. Establishing positions and funding necessary activities will enhance the capacity to respond swiftly and effectively to beetle outbreaks, minimizing economic losses for farmers and protecting crucial crop systems. This is an investment in the sustainability of Hawaii's agriculture, contributing to the overall health of our communities and ecosystems.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawaii Farmers Union

BIISC
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Hilo, HI 96720
(808) 933-3340
www.biisc.org



February 5, 2025

Hearing: House Committee on Higher Education

RE: HB643

Aloha Chair Garrett, Vice Chair Amato, and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 643, which establishes short-term management initiatives for the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) response program and appropriates funding for critical control activities and positions.

The University of Hawai'i CRB Response team on O'ahu has been at the forefront of efforts to control this invasive pest, but their work has relied heavily on funding from the USDA, which is limited in scope. Stable funding from our state is essential to ensure that CRB control efforts can continue as the species is detected in new locations, as it was here on Hawai'i Island in Waikoloa in late 2023. Since that detection, we at BIISC have received crucial information, guidance, and support from the UH-CRB Response team in our efforts to combat this beetle on our island. While the number of detections remains low, we are at a pivotal moment. Eradication of CRB on Hawai'i Island is still possible, but only with continued support and expertise from the CRB Response Team.

We are also strongly in favor of the funding proposed in HB643 to support the development of a biocontrol solution—an essential component of long-term management. Biocontrol provides a sustainable, cost-effective way to reduce CRB populations and lessen the pest's impact on our environment and economy. This proactive approach is especially critical for Hawai'i, where the stakes are high and the costs of inaction are even higher.

As someone working directly with communities to address invasive species issues, I have witnessed firsthand the value of a strong and well-supported response program. The funding provided by HB643 will extend critical support to neighbor islands, ensuring a coordinated effort to control CRB and protect Hawai'i's unique environment and cultural resources.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB643. Mahalo for your time and consideration of this important issue.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Kawehi Young
Public Outreach Coordinator
Big Island Invasive Species Committee



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Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921
e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

February 7, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

TESTIMONY ON HB 643, HD1
RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:30 AM

Aloha Chair Garrett, Vice-Chair Amato, 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 643, HD1, which establishes short-term management initiatives for the coconut rhinoceros beetle response program and appropriates funds for activities and positions related to coconut rhinoceros beetle infestation control.

The coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) was first discovered at Malama Bay on O'ahu in December 2013. CRB feed on and damage coconut, royal, date, and fan palms. If these preferred food sources are unavailable, CRB can shift to feed on other palms and tropical crops such as betelnut, Pandanus species, banana, pineapple, and sugarcane. CRB use their front legs and horn to dig into the crown of trees. Then, they use their sucking mouthparts to feed on the juices in the inner spear. Adult CRB damage living palms, either killing the tree due to direct damage, or opening up the tree to fatal damage from other insects or pathogens.

Coconut rhinoceros beetle detection has steadily increased. High-catch areas continue to be Pearl City Peninsula, Waipi'o Peninsula, West Loch, 'Ewa Beach, and Central O'ahu. We're seeing regular finds on the West Side of O'ahu, increased detection on the North Shore, and concerning trap finds in new areas of Laie, Kahuku, and Waimānalo. The CRB Response provides tools for community members to minimize risk and train businesses to comply with DOA's rule.

HFB agrees that we need resources to control the CRB that will protect our essential palms and crops, reduce the potential for damage to natural resources, and avoid any adverse effects on the health and safety of our residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HB-643-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 5:21:38 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/7/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Denise Boisvert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

OMG, this crucial bill needs to be passed ***YESTERDAY!***

HB-643-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 5:24:32 PM

Testimony for HED on 2/7/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kim Jorgensen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

There is never a good time like the present, as 'they' say.

That said, as you contemplate the merits of this bill and whether or not you want to pass it, be reassured that, **at present, CRB infestations on Oahu are growing exponentially.**

Wish I could say, "No pressure here!"

Please pass this bill. Mahalo.