

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

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**JANUARY 29, 2025
1:00 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 251
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 251 relating to invasive species. The bill requires the Department of Agriculture to adopt rules and carry out an Invasive Species Placard Program for plant nurseries and allows a county to adopt an Invasive Species Placard Program if the Department does not adopt the Program within a certain number of years.

The Department recognizes the threats pests and invasive species pose and offers comments. While this bill does enable the ability for the Department to create administrative rules, there are no fiscal appropriations that would enable the Department to effectuate this measure. While this measure has similarities with the system used by Hawaii Department of Health's (HDOH) Food Safety Branch (FSB), there are significant differences in implementation and risk management that the Department would like to highlight.



One difference is that the FSB inspects food service establishments that are (for the most part) contained within an enclosed structure and the structure itself provides a physical barrier preventing the entry of most pests. The same is not true for locations that sell nursery stock. With limited exceptions locations that sell nursery stock are almost completely exposed to the surrounding environment at all times and pests are able to freely move from one property to another with no regard to property lines. This issue is further exacerbated if a location that sells nursery stock is in close proximity to a property that is not implementing best management practices (BMP). Because pests can move freely, being next to a property that does not maintain BMPs essentially places the location that sells nursery stock at a significant disadvantage of being continuously infested and requiring perpetual treatment of their property to prevent infestations or be extremely vigilant and quickly manage reinfestations as they arise and hope they can be quickly eradicated to maintain their placard status. Also, environmental conditions (high winds, lightning, heavy rains, etc.) may impede or possibly prevent the ability to complete or even conduct surveys or implement BMPs.

Another difference are the scale and scope of inspections. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service 2022 Census of Agriculture for Hawaii, there are 1,169 nurseries. The census does not list total acreage, but does categorize nurseries by acreage ranges. Taking the average of each acreage range and multiplying it against the total nurseries, it is estimated there are 22,665 acres of nursery production. The majority of nurseries (887 or 75.8% of total) are 1 to 9 acres in size, with an estimated acreage of 4,435, with the next largest number being in the 10-49 acres (253 or 21.6% of total), with an estimate acreage of about 7,464. It should be noted that the 29 remaining nurseries estimated acreage almost equals that of other 1,140 nurseries (10,767 to 11,899). As such, there are significant size discrepancies between a nursery and food service establishment and depending on the size and configuration of a nursery, comprehensive pest surveys may take days to weeks to complete. Additionally, a food service establishment inspection is focused on critical control points within the establishment, such as refrigeration units or

the food preparation areas so inspectors can prioritize these areas. At a nursery, a pest can be anywhere, and an inspector cannot prioritize one area over another because they need to utilize multiple survey methods that target each individual pest across an entire property to determine presence or absence of the pest.

The last notable difference are the creation of specific procedures and protocols necessary for risk management. In a food service establishment, the established controls are specifically designed (maintaining certain temperatures, use of gloves/hair nets, handwashing, etc.) and are put into place to significantly reduce and/or prevent the outbreak of a food-borne illness. Additionally, these requirements are standardized for all establishments. In a nursery, pest management strategies and BMPs to manage risk often differ from location to location based on the size of the operation, number of employees, commodities produced/raised, equipment owned, if they are certified organic or not, have a restricted use pesticides license, how they grow/raise their commodities, etc. and all factor into how a specific nursery will address a pest infestation. Because there is so much nuance and variation, should a pest be found, the follow-up surveys and treatment protocols implemented will essentially need to be managed on a case-by-case basis which really limits the scope of rulemaking.

Because of the scope of this measure, the Department believes that 85 FTE positions within the Plant Quarantine Branch are necessary to effectuate it, with an estimated salary and fringe cost of \$7,854,746.25. The positions are listed below.

- 1 FTE Section Chief – Overall programmatic oversight, guidance, direction, budgeting, and operations.
- 1 FTE IT Specialist – Provides IT support for GIS intensive programs, data management, and online display of data and information.
- 2 FTE Office Assistant – Provides administrative support functions to the program.
- 1 FTE Entomologist– Provides subject matter expertise related to identification and confirmation of insects found.

- 1 FTE Plant Pathologist– Provides subject matter expertise related to identification and confirmation of plant diseases found.
- 7 FTE Working Supervisor Plant Quarantine Inspectors – Coordinates, schedules, and monitors day-to-day operations and ensures completion of the various tasks for inspection staff.
- 1 FTE Supervisor Plant Quarantine Inspector – Manages day-to-day operations statewide and directs, supervises, trains, and evaluates operational staff.
- 54 FTE Plant Quarantine Inspectors– Provides independent level staff to conduct surveys, provide recommendations to treat, control, prevent spread/movement of pests, and teaches the nurseries, farmers, and other agricultural-related businesses how to maintain control of the pests through chemical and mechanical means.
- 4 FTE Environmental Health Specialists – Provides environmental regulatory oversight for each district and provides legal recommendations to pesticide use.
- 13 FTE Pest Control Technicians – Provides technician level services and work at the direction of the supervisory level staff.

Additional costs for equipment, vehicles, supplies, offices, etc. needed for the staff would total approximately \$16,476,640.00. Once the program is established, annual recurring costs would be approximately \$8,672,586.25. The Department also suggests removing section (f) on page 6, including the two references to “county” in section (g) on lines 8 and 10, to ensure all nurseries statewide are held to a similar standard for implementing appropriate pest management and obtaining and maintaining an invasive species placard.

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

Seante Committee on AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

1:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 224 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 SENATE BILL 251 RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Senate Bill 251 requires the Department of Agriculture to adopt rules and carry out an Invasive Species Placard Program for plant nurseries and allows a county to adopt an Invasive Species Placard Program if the Department does not adopt the Program within a certain number of years. **The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (Council) provides comments on this measure and defers to the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture.**

Knowing what pathways and commodities can move pests is one of the most critical steps to effective biosecurity. This measure seeks to address a known pathway and to minimize potential inter/intra islands spreading of pests like little fire ants and coquis frogs by establishing a nursery placard system similar to the Department of Health's Food Safety Branch.

The Council recognizes the comments made in the Department of Agriculture's testimony that implementation of such a program would require an increase to their workforce and operations, the cost to which is provided in their testimony. Also highlighted is that unlike restaurants, nurseries are outdoors making it more challenging to mitigate pests coming in from neighboring properties. A suggestion for the program is that it is targeted to a list of identified pests by the Department and that product being moved or sold is free of those listed pests. The Department would have the ability to list additional pests as needed. The Island Invasive Species Committees have established voluntary nursery/landscaper programs on Kaua'i and Hawai'i Island and Maui has a "coqui-free" program. The models for these voluntary programs could be used to inform the planning and implementation of the Department's own program.

The Council's purpose is to provide statewide policy level direction and coordination for the prevention and management of invasive species and is co-chaired by the directors of the Departments of Land & Natural Resources and Agriculture.

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



The Senate
Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Wednesday, January 29, 2025
1:00 PM Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
State Capitol

SUBJECT: Testimony in Strong Support of SB251 “Relating to Invasive Species”

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

I am writing in strong support of SB251 “Relating to Invasive Species” on behalf of the O‘ahu Invasive Species Committee (OISC).

A placard program, whether carried out by the Department of Agriculture (DOA) or facilitated at the county level, will help stop the spread of troublesome invasive species. The nursery trade is one of the major pathways that some of the most high-priority pests are spreading throughout the State and incorporating a placard program will add an additional tool to limit the spread of invasive species that threaten the many industries and the way of life across the islands. This proposed program will also garner consumer confidence in State efforts to mitigate the threats of invasive species and encourage increased efforts from nursery businesses to help limit the spread. This passage of this bill will undoubtedly increase resilience from the threats that invasive species pose to our State.

OISC is grateful for the continued support from all State departments, the legislature, and the members of this Committee. Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Nate Dube, OISC Manager



Officers

Kaipo Kekona
State President

Anabella Bruch
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

Reba Lopez
Treasurer

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

Chapter Presidents

Clarence Baber
Kohala, Hawai'i

Tony Vera
East Hawai'i

Puna, Hawai'i

Andrea Drayer
Ka'u, Hawai'i

Maureen Datta
Kona, Hawai'i

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. **HFUU supports SB251.**

Invasive species pose severe risks to our agricultural industries, native biodiversity, and overall environmental health. By mandating the Department of Agriculture to establish and implement an Invasive Species Placard Program for plant nurseries, SB251 creates a proactive framework that equips plant producers with essential knowledge about potential invasive threats. This program will ensure that nurseries are not inadvertently facilitating the spread of harmful species, thus safeguarding Hawaii's landscapes and agricultural economy. The Hawaii Farmers Union, representing a substantial number of farmers dedicated to sustainable agriculture, views this initiative as vital in maintaining the integrity of both industry practices and environmental stewardship.

Fawn Helekahi-Burns
Hāna, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakalā, Maui

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahālāwai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF

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



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January 29, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON SB 251
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:00 PM

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice-Chair Richards, and Members of the Committees:

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 provides comments on SB 251, which requires the Department of Agriculture to adopt rules and carry out an Invasive Species Placard Program for plant nurseries and allows a county to adopt an Invasive Species Placard Program if the Department does not adopt the Program within a certain number of years.

HFB recognizes the importance of preventing destructive invasive species from entering the State and how difficult it is to manage those that become established in our islands. We appreciate the difficult work of HDOA and its partners in preventing entry and their efforts to eradicate or control these detrimental animals, insects, weeds, diseases, and other pests.

As farmers and ranchers, we understand the need for updated policies and procedures to prevent the spread of these pest species. Our way of life and our livelihood is entirely dependent upon the ecological balance of our environment.

HFB has the following concerns.

- The bill indicates that it amends HRS Chapter 150A by adding a new section to be entitled "**Invasive species inspection placard program**". It appears that this new part is intended to be in addition to the current Chapter 150A which concerns the same issues. Does this new part apply only to agriculture-related businesses, but not to nearby State, federal, or other properties that may be infested with and spreading invasive species?

- Assuming the bill's requirements are only applicable to agriculture-related businesses such as farms and ranches, is it fair to target these entities if invasive pests are ubiquitous in the area, making it nearly impossible to prevent re-infestation, especially if there are no similar control requirements for the surrounding properties.
- Would large ranches, for example, those on hundreds of thousands of acres on Hawai'i Island that have been devastated by the two-lined spittlebug, be subject to these new laws even though there are currently no reasonable, cost-effective treatments available? Would having these pests on a farm or ranch be considered a violation?
- Because of the diversity and complexity of invasive species control, we are especially concerned about the proposed HRS Chapter 150A-_(b3) regarding the disclosure of the inspection report as a public document and the section requiring public placarding. These sections do not seem appropriate. Placarding could permanently stigmatize a business even if the producer is cooperative and corrects any deficiencies found upon inspection.

Department funding and staffing have long been insufficient to adequately prevent the entry and establishment of dangerous and damaging invasive species. This bill will require extensive resources and personnel to educate the public and producers, assist agricultural businesses with compliance, and conduct inspections and enforcement. Without significant funding, this measure will be impossible to implement.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments and thank you for your continued support of Hawai'i's agricultural community.



The Senate
Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Wednesday, January 29, 2025
1:00 PM Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
State Capitol

Testimony in Support of SB 251

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

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) is **in support of SB 251**, *requiring the Department of Agriculture to adopt rules and carry out an Invasive Species Placard Program for plant nurseries and allows a county to adopt an Invasive Species Placard Program if the Department does not adopt the Program within a certain number of years.*

We believe that the public should be reasonably confident that commercial nurseries receive the most current pest information and relevant best management practices (BMPs) related to priority pests. Further, we believe that this placard system is the best available way to ensure that nurseries have and use the information, following the “Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point” (HACCP) model used in New Zealand and Australia to prevent or address priority pests before they spread and affect other nurseries or communities.

We also note that the Hawaii Department of Agriculture’s report ([HDOA’s report](#)) laid out a plan and cost for a placard program that did not narrowly focus on “locations that sell nursery stock”, as this bill proposes. Instead, their report included “nurseries, farms, and other agriculture-related businesses,” as called for in HCR 24. SB 251 has a narrow focus on locations that sell nursery stock because nurseries are a major pathway for the introduction and spread of invasive species and is a sensible “critical control point” where a more systematic approach is warranted.

As noted in testimony by HDOA in 2024, recommended pest eradication actions, such as the 8-treatments over the course of a year to fully eradicate entire area-infestations of LFA, don’t necessarily fit with the placard model. However, we also note that pest treatment options are available to immediately treat individual plants to make them safe for sale to the public, as HDOA demonstrated with their good work in support of the Punahou Carnival plant sale last year.

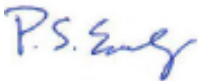
CGAPS is able and very willing to assist the Department of Agriculture in developing and planning such a program and would be delighted to help in any way.

Mahalo for your consideration of our testimony.

Aloha,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Christy Martin".

Christy Martin
CGAPS Program Manager

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

Stephanie Easley
CGAPS Legal Fellow



SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

January 29, 2024

1:00 PM

Conference Room 224

In SUPPORT of:

SB251: RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

SB562: RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

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

On behalf of our over 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS SB251 and SB562**, which will help to mitigate the ongoing and future impacts of invasive pests on our native ecosystems, cultural practices, food security, public health, economy, and the overall quality of life of present and future generations.

Hawai'i's history provides us with a host of lessons regarding the wide-ranging and potentially irreversible damage that invasive species can inflict on our islands and ways of life. Invasive plants and wildlife have overtaken entire watersheds, impacting not just native habitat but also reducing aquifer recharge, increasing our vulnerability to floods and wildfires, and smothering our nearshore reefs and waters with runoff. Parasites and other pests have impacted local food production and increased the use of toxic pesticides on farms and in home gardens, risking both public health as well as threatening stream and nearshore species critical to our aquatic ecosystems. Invasive animals have also extirpated native species, continue to threaten others with outright extinction, and continue to undermine public health by acting as vectors for zoonotic diseases. Most recently, the spread of invasive pests such as the little fire ant, coconut rhinoceros beetle, hala scale, two-lined spittlebug, and others will require substantial and long-needed policies and investments over the long-term, to prevent additional and even greater impacts to our islands and our future generations.

Accordingly, the Sierra Club strongly supports the proposals in these measures, to address a major and largely unaddressed vector for the introduction and spread of invasive species: plant nurseries.

A placard system as proposed in SB251 will encourage responsible and proactive prevention and control practices by nurseries, facilitate interventions by the Department of Agriculture to prevent and address infestations, and allow consumers to make better informed decisions about the risk of purchasing and bringing home infested plants or other nursery products from any given business.

The comprehensive nursery registration program in SB562, which provides for best



management practices, mandatory reporting of high priority pests, prohibitions on the sale of nursery stock infested with invasive species, administrative inspections, and quarantine authorities, along with a streamlined process for designating new pest species, will also address longstanding regulatory gaps that have allowed nurseries to harbor, transport, and sell pest-infested plants and other products.

Much remains uncertain as we continue to reckon with the consequences of Hawai'i's longstanding failure to enact critical biosecurity protections. However, it is certain that much stronger action, including but not limited to the proposals in the aforementioned bills, will be necessary to mitigate or prevent the worst of these and other future impacts to our lives and that of our children and future generations.

Accordingly, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS** these measures. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

SB-251

Submitted on: 1/25/2025 5:12:13 PM

Testimony for AEN on 1/29/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin Faccenda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure as a common-sense regulation on an industry which has the potential to permanently alter the landscape of the islands through the spread of pests such as LFA or coqui frog contained within pots. You wouldn't want to eat at a restaurant with a rat problem, nor would you want to buy plants from a nursery with a LFA or coqui problem.

I suggest that this bill be modified to give more guidance as to what conditions meet the red, yellow, or green classifications as that is currently left to the HDOA to define. Defining these in the law itself would help reduce ambiguity and prevent misinterpretation by the HDOA.

SB-251

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 7:55:38 PM

Testimony for AEN on 1/29/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beverly Heiser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, III, and Committee Members,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT SB251 that requires the Department of Agriculture to adopt rules and carry out an invasive Species Placard Program for plant nurseries.

It would be best to implement the Placard Program as soon as possible. Invasive species tend to multiply and spread quickly to disrupt the ecosystem. Once an invasive species or pathogen becomes out of control it will be more difficult to eradicate and we risk losing native plants and animals unique to Hawai‘i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-251

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 7:47:13 AM

Testimony for AEN on 1/29/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin Armstrong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is one step on the long journey to better managing invasive species throughout the islands.

SB-251

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:18:24 AM

Testimony for AEN on 1/29/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Helen Sofaer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Nurseries are key to preventing and containing invasive species; please adopt this bill. Mahalo!

SB-251

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 9:48:05 PM

Testimony for AEN on 1/29/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Joseph Wat	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha nui kākou,

I support a placard system for nurseries although there are a lot of details that remain to be defined in the program. Consumers should be able to purchase plants locally with the confidence that the businesses have the infrastructure and information required to prevent the spread of plant diseases and invasive species.

That said, an appropriate placard system will have open channels of communication for feedback. Please ensure that there is a way to log complaints and any subsequent infestations of invasive species. While there may not be a way to know an invasive species was sourced at a single purchase, if several complaints are made against a single nursery it warrants an inspection.

Also, please work to fund this program appropriately to ensure that this system serves as a boon to businesses working to implement BMP's for invasive species management (despite whatever their neighbors are doing) and not a slow certification process that holds back small family farms.

If properly funded, a program like this could help bring business to the hard-working folks in Waimanalo who are catching business cracks because some neighbors in the area have left the whole region with a reputation for being CRB and LFA infested.

In particular, stating clearly that counties are able to implement this program while the HDOA builds up steam is a great idea. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha nō,

- Joe

SB-251

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 11:26:20 PM

Testimony for AEN on 1/29/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julie Kuo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB251. I am an O‘ahu resident writing in support of SB 251, requiring the Department of Agriculture to adopt rules and implement an Invasive Species Placard Program for plant nurseries, and allowing counties to adopt an Invasive Species Placard Program if the Department does not adopt the Program within a year.

I want to be informed and confident that when I purchase a plant from a commercial nursery, that they are applying protective standards and best management practices that prevent priority pests and invasive species from spreading within the State. Protecting Hawai‘i from invasive species through preventative measures is the most economic solution to managing invasive species (as compared to controlling pest outbreaks across the State). The placard system represents a viable solution in ‘prevention.’ In addition, the system is a cost-effective way to promote industry and public engagement on collectively protecting Hawaii’s natural environment by preventing further invasive species introductions and their spread across islands.

Mahalo nui loa for your time,

Julie Kuo

SB-251

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:34:04 AM

Testimony for AEN on 1/29/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Uma Nagendra	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Plant nurseries and the horticultural trade in general have been major vectors for spreading invasive species recently, especially between O‘ahu and other islands and within the island of Kaua‘i. The spread of little fire ants throughout Kaua‘i in particular can be linked directly to harmful nursery practices, where large nurseries are knowingly selling material that is infested with invasive species and not informing the public. We need both preventative measures and consequences for non-compliance. If all of our "biosecurity" prevention programs are effectively voluntary, there is no real reason for the nursery industry to comply until it is too late.

SB-251

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 9:35:28 PM

Testimony for AEN on 1/29/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Molly Mamaril	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing in support of SB 251, requiring the Department of Agriculture to adopt rules and carry out an Invasive Species Placard Program for plant nurseries. It also allows a county to adopt an Invasive Species Placard Program if the Department does not adopt the Program within a certain number of years. This placard system is the best available way to ensure that nurseries have and use the information, following the “Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point” (HACCP) model used in New Zealand and Australia to prevent or address priority pests before they spread and affect other nurseries or communities.

Thank you for your consideration,

Molly Mamaril

SB-251

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 8:48:54 PM

Testimony for AEN on 1/29/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Chang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of SB251. This system works for DOH and restaurants, it can work with the nursery industry.

SB-251

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:50:28 AM

Testimony for AEN on 1/29/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mashuri Waite	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawii needs to do more to the spread of pests and diseases in our economy including in the plant nursery trade.

SB-251

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:53:20 AM

Testimony for AEN on 1/29/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jean Fujikawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. I love buying plants and would like to do so knowing that I am not inadvertently buying plants that are invasive pests or that are infested with invasive pests.

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

My name is Kiana Otsuka, and I am a concerned O'ahu resident writing in support of **SB 251**, requiring the Department of Agriculture to adopt rules and carry out an Invasive Species Placard Program for plant nurseries and allows a county to adopt an Invasive Species Placard Program if the Department does not adopt the Program within a certain number of years.

I want to be confident that when I purchase a plant from a commercial nursery, that they are receiving the most current pest information and relevant best management practices (BMPs) related to priority pests. A placard system is the best available way to ensure that nurseries have and use the information, following the "Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point" (HACCP) model used in New Zealand and Australia to prevent or address priority pests before they spread and affect other nurseries or communities.

Mahalo for your consideration of my testimony.

Mahalo,

Kiana Otsuka

SB-251

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:35:09 AM

Testimony for AEN on 1/29/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Koa Grabar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of SB251. Plant nurseries play a significant role in the accidental introduction of invasive and non-native species to Hawai'i, posing a threat to native ecosystems and agriculture. Proper regulation and management are essential to prevent these introductions and protect Hawai'i's unique environment.

SB-251

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:44:36 AM

Testimony for AEN on 1/29/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Megan Vynne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill

SB-251

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 10:43:23 AM

Testimony for AEN on 1/29/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chuck Chimera	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing to express my support for SB 251, which requires the Hawai‘i Department of Agriculture to adopt rules and implement an Invasive Species Placard Program for plant nurseries. This bill is a critical step toward protecting Hawai‘i’s environment, agriculture, and economy from the devastating impacts of invasive species.

As the bill highlights, Hawai‘i’s nursery industry is a vital part of our economy, contributing over \$81 million in local and export sales. However, the spread of invasive species such as the little fire ant, coqui frog, and harmful pathogens threatens not only this industry but also our unique ecosystems and way of life. The unintentional purchase and transport of infested plants by the public have exacerbated the spread of these pests, making it clear that proactive measures are needed to address this issue.

The proposed Invasive Species Placard Program is a practical and effective solution. By requiring nurseries to display placards indicating their invasive pest status, consumers will be better informed and empowered to make responsible purchasing decisions. This transparency will help reduce the spread of invasive species and encourage nurseries to adopt best management practices. Additionally, the program’s use of green, yellow, and red placards will provide clear and visible indicators of compliance, ensuring accountability and promoting corrective actions when necessary.

I particularly appreciate the bill’s emphasis on public education and engagement. By informing consumers about the risks of invasive species and the importance of purchasing pest-free plants, this program will foster a culture of awareness and responsibility. Furthermore, the provision allowing counties to adopt their own placard programs if HDOA does not act within a specified timeframe ensures that this critical initiative will move forward regardless of bureaucratic delays.

Invasive species pose a significant threat to Hawai‘i’s biodiversity, agriculture, and economy. SB 251 represents a proactive and collaborative approach to addressing this challenge, and I urge the Committee to support its passage.

Thank you for your dedication to protecting Hawai‘i’s natural resources and for considering this important legislation.

Mahalo,
Chuck Chimera
Honokaa, HI

SB-251

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 11:34:57 AM

Testimony for AEN on 1/29/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To whom it may concern,

I strongly support this initiative for the protection of native species from the negative impacts of invasive species. This cannot wait. Something must be done now.

Thanks,

Kristina

SB-251

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 12:16:31 PM

Testimony for AEN on 1/29/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Elliott	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support designation of HDOA to adopt rules and carry out an Invasive Species Placard Program for plant nurseries. Additionally to allow a county to adopt an Invasive Species Placard Program if HDOA does not adopt the Program within a certain amount of time.

SB-251

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 12:56:57 PM

Testimony for AEN on 1/29/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jane Beachy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I'm writing in support of SB5251, which proposes HDOA adopt rules and carry out an Invasive Species Placard Program for plant nurseries. Invasive species cause major damage to Hawaii's native ecosystems and agriculture, impact quality of life, and erode cultural connections to culturally significant plants and animals. Sadly, the horticultural industry provides one venue for such pests to reach Hawaii, and also serves as a vector, facilitating the spread of pests across the State. One example of this is the coqui frog, thought to be an accidental introduction to Hawaii Island via the horticultural trade. Coqui in Hawaii reach densities many times greater than their native Puerto Rico, amplifying the impact of their loud calls, which had a negative economic impact on property values, as well as the impacts of their predation of native arthropods. Another example is the Little Fire Ant (LFA). While all ants cause major environmental havoc in Hawaii, which has no native ants, LFA's painful stings and tree-dwelling habit are particularly devastating to agriculture and erode quality of life for anyone who enjoys gardening, hiking, and spending time outdoors. Both of these species have spread across the islands, and one major vector is the horticultural trade. Every time my 79-year-old mother, an avid gardener, or I purchase a plant, I worry about whether we are accidentally introducing a new pest to our shared property. The invasive species placard program is an important biosecurity tool to combat invasive pest spread.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jane Reppun Beachy

SB-251

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:09:41 PM

Testimony for AEN on 1/29/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristen Kane	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Nurserys are currently the main vector of Little Fire Ant on Oahu with copanies knowingly spreading the ants just so they can continue to turn a profit. All the while the HDOA has turned their backs and offered liitle support to subsidise treatment & quarentine procedures.

HDOA should already be inspecting all items coming into our state and even interisland. That they continue to allow the interisland spread of some of the worlds worst known invasives species shows a negligent department with poor oversight. Our state needs to do better to protect the fragile ecosystems and ensure border and even inter island biosecurity.