

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621
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DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
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AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Monday, February 10, 2025
1:01 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 224 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 658
RELATING TO THE HAWAII ANT LAB

House Bill 658 appropriates the Department of Agriculture funds to support the Hawai'i Ant Lab (Lab) in mitigating the effects of little fire ants (LFA) in Hawai'i. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure** to protect Hawai'i and to ensure that the Lab avoids a recurrence of employee furloughs at this critical time in LFA management.

LFA is one of the most insidious invasive species affecting all aspects of life in Hawai'i, including human health, the environment, agriculture, tourism, recreation, and quality of life. The ants are known for painful stings, which cause itchy welts lasting weeks and even blindness in pets. They can prey upon native Hawaiian wildlife, such as insects and turtles. Infestations can negatively impact the agriculture industry by devastating fruit crops, ornamental plants, and stinging field workers. LFA can disrupt recreational areas such as forests and beaches and severely affect the quality of life of Hawai'i residents when infestations occur on private property.

The Lab is a valued Department partner and was established as part of the University of Hawai'i to protect Hawai'i from the introduction and spread of LFA and other invasive ants. The Lab's strengths include innovative research to develop new treatments; education of stakeholders (homeowners, businesses, and natural resource managers) on best management strategies; conducting surveys of ports-of-entry, green waste facilities, nurseries, and other high-risk areas; and participation in statewide LFA eradication efforts. To ensure continuous support of the Lab, the Department recommends passing the

appropriation through DLNR LNR402 due to the Department's successful track record of funding the Lab.

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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

FEBRUARY 10, 2025
1:01 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224 & VIDEOCONFERENCE

SENATE BILL NO. 658
RELATING TO THE HAWAII ANT LAB

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 658 relating to the Hawaii Ant Lab. This bill appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture to support the Hawaii Ant Lab (HAL) in mitigating the effects of little fire ants (LFA) in the State. The Department supports this measure.

With the increased focus on biosecurity and management of pests, including LFA, dedicated funding toward specialized programs such as HAL, ensure continued research into the development of new LFA management, detection, and eradication techniques, all of which are critical to statewide success. As the Department's mission is to engage in implementing control and eradication measures of pests and managing the spread of pests, the Department believes that this funding to HAL through the Department will be beneficial towards maintaining LFA control and eradication programs, particularly on islands where LFA is not widespread, until landscape level management techniques can be discovered and made available.

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
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VOTING MEMBERS

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KATHLEEN HO, D.Env
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PARWINDER GREWAL, Ph.D.
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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 AND ENVIRONMENT

Monday, February 10, 2025
1:01 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 224 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of SENATE BILL 648 RELATING TO THE HAWAII ANT LAB

Senate Bill 648 Appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture to support the Hawaii Ant Lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State. **The Hawaii Invasive Species Council (Council) supports this measure.**

The legislature has declared that invasive species are the biggest threat to Hawaii's economy, environment, tourism, health, and way-of-life of its residents, and no invasive species encapsulates this devastation better than the Little Fire Ant (LFA). This bill would provide desperately needed funding for the Hawaii Ant Lab (HAL) that are the lead entity when it comes to research and extension for invasive ants.

HAL was established in 2009 to address the overwhelming need for research and assistance to address and eradicate little fire ant infestations. Effective treatment is labor-intensive that involves surveying, treatment, and long-term monitoring duties that can take a few years to scientifically document efforts. In recent years, the Hawaii Invasive Species Council, through the DLNR, and the Department of Agriculture helped fund HAL, but funding has not been stable, and HAL has furloughed staff multiple times over the last three years to ensure funds are able to stretch across a single year. This comes at a critical time when infestations on Oahu are on the rise and moving to a place where continued management is the only option. Kauai has two large infestations, one of which is located along a major waterway and will take a dedicated on-island team, which currently does not exist, to manage and control those infestations.

Maui had one of the largest little fire ant infestations in the State, not including Hawaii Island, in Nahiku, Maui. The site was close to 170 acres running along a major stream, stretching through densely vegetated terrain and private property. With funding provided by HISC and the County of Maui, Maui Invasive Species Committee was able to hire a dedicated little fire ant team that worked with Hawaii Ant Lab to develop an aerial treatment. After several deployments of the treatment and monitoring missions, this previously infested area is now

down to only a few ants. This shows what can be achieved with consistent and adequate resources.

Given the crisis of Little Fire Ant, this funding bill would help address the short and long-term needs to control this invasive pest and develop new tools that could be deployed to manage more widespread infestations and increase extension services to support farmers and industries severely impacted on Hawaii Island.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support.



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February 10, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON SB 658
RELATING TO THE HAWAII ANT LAB

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:01 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 SB 658, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture to support the Hawaii Ant Lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State.

Invasive species have become one of the most devastating problems impacting Hawai'i. Many invasive species are damaging Hawai'i's environment and economy. Agriculture has a vested interest in this matter. Agriculture suffers when invasive species are introduced. Every year, numerous new pests are introduced into the State, such as the coqui frog, coffee berry borer, macadamia felted coccid, little fire ant, coconut rhinoceros beetle, two-lined spittlebug, small hive beetle, and varroa mite, to name a few. Control measures take time to develop, leaving farmers and ranchers at risk. This is inconsistent with the State's goal of increasing self-sufficiency and sustainability.

HFB recognizes the harm that the little fire ant has caused to farms and businesses, as well as the quality of life of those affected by the pest. Adequate funding for the Hawai'i Ant Lab funding is critical to support their little fire ant mitigation and eradication efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

SB-658

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 2:29:09 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Redfeather	Testifying for Ka Ohana O Na Pua - Director	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

These folks stand between the people, our food and our land.....without them we would be in deep kim chi. Or I should say, even deeper than we already are. LFA is one of the most dangerous insects on planet Earth, whole communities in the South Pacific have abandoned their island homes because their presence created an unliivable situation. As much funding as possible should go to this professional, and capable group of scientists that we all rely on every single day of the year. Mahalo.



The Senate
Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Monday, February 10, 2025
1:00 PM Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
State Capitol

SUBJECT: Testimony in Strong Support of SB658 “Relating to the Hawai‘i Ant Lab”

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

I am writing in strong support of SB658 “Relating to the Hawai‘i Ant Lab” on behalf of the O‘ahu Invasive Species Committee (OISC).

The Hawai‘i Ant Lab (HAL) is crucial to the on-going response to little fire ant (LFA) across the State, and especially here on O‘ahu. HAL is a valued partner and provides technical expertise, additional field capacity for survey and control work, and assists OISC in gaining access to private properties needed for survey and control. HAL has been vital to OISC and Statewide efforts, including helping create island and region specific workplans that are needed to have an organized and successful response across O‘ahu neighborhoods. Although any amount of funding will help, I encourage the legislature to explore funding this program more in future years as it will yield a more timely and successful control and eradication response.

OISC is grateful for the continued support from the legislature and the members of this Committee regarding invasive species management. Thank you for your time and consideration on this bill.

Sincerely,

Nate Dube, OISC Manager



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Mason Scharer
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Kaiea Medeiros
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Maui

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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 SB658.**

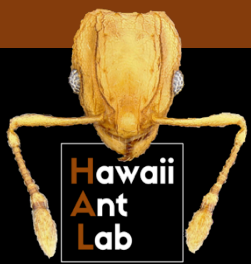
SB658 is a critical measure to ensure the continued operation of the Hawaii Ant Lab, the state's primary resource for research, prevention, and management of invasive ants, particularly the little fire ant (LFA). With LFA infestations increasing on Oahu, Maui, and Kauai, additional funding is necessary to prevent further spread and mitigate the severe impacts these pests have on agriculture, native ecosystems, and local communities. Without adequate support, the Hawaii Ant Lab has already faced staff furloughs, limiting its ability to conduct the long-term monitoring and treatment required for effective eradication.

LFA infestations pose a direct threat to farmers by harming livestock, making agricultural work hazardous, and thereby reducing yields. By securing stable funding for the Hawaii Ant Lab, the state is investing in long-term solutions that not only protect farms but also uphold food security and environmental health. HFU recognizes the Hawaii Ant Lab's expertise and proven methods in controlling LFA populations and urges continued legislative support for their essential work.

Appropriating \$1,000,000 annually for the next two fiscal years will provide the Hawaii Ant Lab with the resources needed to expand its efforts, support island-specific response teams, and strengthen partnerships with farmers and local organizations. This funding is a necessary step toward ensuring that Hawaii's agricultural lands, native forests, and residential areas remain protected from the devastating effects of invasive ants.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union



Hawaii State Senate
Committee on Agriculture and the Environment

FEBRUARY 10, 2025
1:30p
Hawaii State Capitol Conference Room 224

SUBJECT: Testimony – In Support of SB658

Dear Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the AEN Committee

The Hawaii Ant Lab (HAL) is grateful for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of SB 658 *“Relating to the Hawaii Ant Lab”*.

The Hawaii Ant Lab (HAL) was formed in 2008 as a collaboration between the Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) and University of Hawaii (UH). Our mission is to protect Hawaii from new invasive ant introductions, prevent the spread of invasive ants, provide proven and practical treatment methods to the public, and provide technical and on the ground support for LFA control and eradication efforts throughout the State. We achieve our mission through extensive surveillance efforts, research relating to improved control options, outreach and education on LFA prevention, detection, and control, and by providing expert technical support to communities, industry, and partner agencies for effective control and eradication initiatives. Between its inception and 2021, HAL received approximately half of our funding through grants from HDOA. At the same time that funding support from HDOA ended in 2021, LFA detections on Maui, Oahu, and Kauai began to increase exponentially along with the need for HAL to provide increased state-wide and interagency support.

Coordinated, interagency efforts to prevent and control the spread of LFA and other invasive ants is essential. However, HAL is funded through annual competitive grants and our work is prioritized and guided based on these grants and additional work or coordinated efforts are not possible without additional financial and staffing capacity. SB658 is a significant step towards ensuring HAL is properly funded to meet our mission goals for the State and reestablish our project's partnership with HDOA.

Regards,
Dr. Michelle Montgomery PhD
Manager – Hawaii Ant Lab

SB-658

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 3:01:24 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas Perrine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The spread of little fire ants is an ongoing disaster. Please fund the Ant Lab to find ways to slow the invasion.

SB-658

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:25:15 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB658 that would appropriate funds to the Department of Agriculture to support the Hawai'i Ant Lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants (LFA) in the State.

LFA have had devastating impacts, and not only to agriculture and the economy, but to the environment as a whole and to the quality of life of families in the communities they have infested. We need to eradicate LFA throughout the state, and not allow them to continue to spread. Failure to take timely action on LFA will only make it harder and more expensive to address this serious problem. Appropriating funds to support the Hawaii ant lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State is a must.

Last year little fire ants showed up at the Punahou Carnival. What more do I need to say? Please pass this important measure. Mahalo!

SB-658

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:54:20 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lois Crozer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you to the Hawaii Ant Lab for helping control Little Fire Ants in Lanikai. People were getting bitten on the paths to the beach. Sure the upside is fewer people, but the downside is an environmental catastrophe. We need to get these ants under control NOW.

SB-658

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:04:13 AM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shaya Honarvar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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SB-658

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:02:23 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support this measure to fund HAL. They have a record of being very effective with community outreach and LFA control.

Thank you for you consideration,

Kevin Faccenda,

Honolulu HI

SB-658

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:57:08 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/10/2025 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eileen Hilton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Letter of Support for Hawaii Senate Bill 658

February 9, 2025

On behalf of the Windward Coalition, I am writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 658, which aligns with our mission to enhance the quality of life for residents in Windward O‘ahu and address pressing community challenges. The Windward Coalition is a voluntary community action group composed of residents committed to addressing issues that impact our region's families, youth, and natural resources.

We strongly support Senate Bill 658, which appropriates funds to the Department of Agriculture to support the Hawaii Ant Lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants (LFA) in our state.

Little fire ants pose a significant threat to Hawaii's ecosystems, agriculture, and quality of life.

The Hawaii Ant Lab has been at the forefront of LFA research and management, developing innovative control methods and providing valuable resources to our communities. Their work is crucial in our ongoing battle against this invasive species.

By supporting SB658, we can:

1. Enhance research efforts to develop more effective control strategies
2. Improve public education and outreach programs
3. Strengthen early detection and rapid response capabilities
4. Protect our agricultural sector from LFA-related damages

We urge you to pass SB658 and provide the necessary funding to combat this serious threat to our islands. The investment in the Hawaii Ant Lab will yield significant returns in protecting our environment, economy, and way of life.

Mahalo for your consideration and commitment to the well-being of Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Eileen Hilton

President, The Windward Coalition