

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 COMMITTEES ON WAYS AND MEANS

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 2025
9:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 746, SD2
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 746, SD2 relating to invasive species, which establishes and appropriates moneys for a two-year pilot program under the Department of Land and Natural Resources that incentivizes community members to collect and submit the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) and its larvae for compensation.

The Department of Agriculture (Department) supports the intent of this measure but has concerns regarding how the compensation aspect would be implemented. The Department believes that finding ways to incorporate communities into ongoing control efforts are extremely important, particularly in long-term management and educational standpoints, and depending on how the program is implemented, could make a difference in achieving the highest goal regarding any pest, eradication. The Department believes that "compensation", depending on the form and amount, could invigorate community action. However, the Department is concerned that this measure does not preclude the use of any kind of monetization for submitting CRB and should a



monetary-based structure such as a bounty be used, it could result in the opposite effect on CRB infestations that this measure seeks to remedy.

The biggest challenge for a program such as this one is to find a form of compensation that will greatly incentivize participation but also ensures the compensation structure is not abused. When dealing with a pest, when any form of compensation is tied to it, particularly a monetary one, there is an increased likelihood that individuals seeking to exploit the system would breed and also possibly spread the pest for financial gain, thereby exacerbating the problem the program was designed to deal with. This issue is further exacerbated when dealing with arthropod pests as they are generally not difficult to breed, and often reproduce quickly, and in high numbers. Alternatively, if the compensation is minimized, there is generally a significant decrease in community participation, rendering that part of the program ineffective. On page 3, beginning on line 6, while the measure does include language that seeks to address this issue, there is no way for the Department of Land and Natural Resources to make any determination that submitted CRB are “bred by human intervention”. One possible way to address this would be to limit compensation to time-limited events only in a specified area, but this would lessen landscape level impacts, particularly for individual community members.

The Department would be completely supportive of this measure if the compensation structure for community members was clearly defined in such a way as to prevent abuse or was removed from the measure. However, the Department believes that consultation with the Hawaii Invasive Species Council could alleviate some of the aforementioned concerns and is in strong support of the other CRB-related aspects of this measure regarding community engagement, workshops, and training events; digital and social media campaigns; media advertising; and educational materials and outreach.

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**

House Committee on AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

9:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 325 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of SENATE BILL 746 SENATE DRAFT 2 RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Senate Bill 746 Senate Draft 2 establishes and appropriates moneys for a two-year pilot program under the Department of Land and Natural Resources that incentivizes community members to collect and submit the coconut rhinoceros beetle and its larvae for compensation. **The Hawaii Invasive Species Council (Council) supports the intent and provides comments on this measure.**

The coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) is a highly destructive pest that has caused significant damage to our coconut palms, as well as other trees, throughout Pacific Region and Hawaii. Invasive species like the CRB require coordinated, scientifically informed efforts that consider the broader ecosystem, pest biology, and long-term eradication strategies. Once a pest becomes widespread in an area, it is necessary for the community to become engaged in the management.

This measure is a creative method to engage and educate the community while addressing some of the infestations of CRB especially in areas where there are already community programs and organizations in place. The Council shares the same concerns of the Departments of Land & Natural Resources and Agriculture that the structure and compensation method for community members would need to be clearly defined to prevent abuse or be removed from the measure altogether.

The Council continues to support and prioritize ongoing efforts to prevent and manage CRB and community awareness and engagement are an integral part of those efforts, but there are only two dedicated outreach specialists that focus solely on CRB for the entire State with the University of Hawaii CRB Response Team. Enhancing outreach efforts and developing a community engagement program would require increased capacity and a dedicated team with clear objectives. The Council would welcome the opportunity to be the forum for discussion on the development and implementation of a community-based program.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
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

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

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

Senate Committee on
AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Wednesday, March 12, 2025
9:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 325 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 746, SENATE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Senate Bill 746, Senate Draft 2 establishes and appropriates money for a two-year pilot program under the Department of Land and Natural Resources that incentivizes community members to collect and submit the coconut rhinoceros beetle and its larvae for compensation. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports the intent of this bill and offers the following comments.**

Coconut rhinoceros beetles (CRB) feed on the crowns of coconut palms and other palm species, including Hawai'i's native loulu palms. CRB creates large holes in the trunk, where adults feed and burrow. This weakens the tree and can eventually kill it. This is a significant pest across the Pacific Region, and in 2023, it expanded from O'ahu to Kaua'i, Maui, and Hawai'i islands. While community engagement is a valuable tool in addressing invasive species, past bounty programs in other regions (e.g., cane toads in Australia, stoats and opossums in New Zealand) have shown limited success in reducing pest populations. While bounties can be a helpful educational tool, they require oversight beyond the Department's current capacity.

The Department emphasizes the need for integrated pest management (IPM) strategies, such as biological control using natural predators or parasitoids, are urgently needed. In addition, public outreach and encouraging residents to report beetle sightings and avoid transporting infested mulch would help manage this destructive insect. The Department continues to support the CRB Response Team based at the University of Hawai'i and island-based working groups to protect threatened resources.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments on 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

TO: Representative Kirstin Kahaloa, Chair
Representative Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair
Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

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

DATE: March 10, 2025

SUBJECT: SUPPORT OF SB746 SD2 RELATED TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure. The act establishes a two-year pilot program under the Department of Land and Natural Resources that incentivizes community members to collect and submit the coconut rhinoceros beetle and its larvae for compensation. Requires a report to the Legislature. Appropriates funds.

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

1. Hawai'i is the endemic species, meaning found here and no where else, capital of the world. We have the rarest native and endemic plants, animals, and micro organisms. All of these species are foundational to our ability to live and thrive here in Hawai'i. Furthermore, due to an incredible lack of overall biosecurity at all levels, we as a government are losing the fight in protecting our native and endemic environment. Nearly every endemic species in Hawai'i is either endangered, critically endangered, or extinct. Simply put, without these native species and a healthy environment, our ability to inhabit these islands become less likely for our future generations.
2. We believe that there needs to be short- and long-term management initiatives to manage and control the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB). Management, eradication, and prevention of the spread of CRB is foundational to food security, the health and wellness of our 'āina, and sustainability and resilience overall.

3. There are known biocontrol agents that are utilized in Southeast Asia to manage CRB. Safely testing and researching these agents for use in Hawai'i, could potentially support significantly our collective management initiatives of this very invasive pest.
4. Our cultural identity and ecological heritage in Hawai'i are directly negatively impacted by CRB. We must seek every option in the management and control of CRB; from community education to expanding the current CRB response program.

Mahalo for your consideration.



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759
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e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

March 12, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON SB 746, SD2
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:00 AM

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice-Chair Kusch, 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 746, SD1, which establishes a two-year community-based incentive eradication pilot program under the Department of Land and Natural Resources to eradicate the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) in Hawai'i. This measure is a critical step in engaging the public in the fight against one of the most destructive invasive species threatening Hawai'i's agriculture, native ecosystems, and cultural landscapes.

The coconut rhinoceros beetle was first detected in Hawai'i in 2013 at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam and has since spread across O'ahu and to other islands, including Kaua'i, Maui, and Hawai'i Island. CRB infestations cause significant damage to coconut, royal, date, and fan palms, weakening and eventually killing these trees. The beetle's impact extends beyond palms, as it also poses a threat to crops such as Pandanus species, banana, pineapple, and sugarcane. The economic consequences include increased costs for pest control, tree replacement, and lost revenue from agriculture, landscaping, and tourism.

SB 746, SD2 creates a community-driven approach to CRB eradication by providing compensation to residents, farmers, landscape professionals, and other stakeholders who collect and submit beetles and larvae to the Department of Land and Natural Resources. This incentive-based strategy has been successfully used in other invasive species control programs, mobilizing community participation while complementing existing government-led eradication efforts.

Key components of this program include:

- Direct compensation to community members for beetle and larvae collection
- Program administration and oversight by the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council
- Community engagement, workshops, and training events to educate the public on CRB identification and control
- Digital and social media campaigns to raise awareness and encourage participation
- Media advertising and outreach to increase public involvement

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau has long advocated for increased resources to combat the spread of invasive species, including the coconut rhinoceros beetle. Controlling CRB infestations requires a multi-faceted approach that includes biological controls, pest control tools, trapping, green waste management, and public engagement. By integrating a community-based response into existing control efforts, SB 746, SD2 will enhance early detection, containment, and eradication of this highly destructive pest.

We urge the committee to pass SB 746, SD2 to expand CRB control efforts and protect Hawai'i's agriculture, environment, and cultural resources from further damage.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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March 12, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON SB 1657, SD2
RELATING TO THE AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:00 AM

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice-Chair Kusch, 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 provides comments on SB 1657, SD2, which authorizes the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) to acquire real property through condemnation for agricultural purposes. Ensuring that agricultural lands remain dedicated to farming and are not lost to non-agricultural uses is essential for Hawai'i's long-term food security and agricultural sustainability.

ADC was established to facilitate the transition of Hawai'i's agricultural industry from plantation agriculture to diversified farming. Over the years, ADC has played a key role in managing and developing agricultural lands, supporting infrastructure improvements, and working to ensure that land and water resources are available for farmers and ranchers. However, with increasing pressures from urbanization and competing land uses, securing land for agricultural purposes has become more challenging.

Providing ADC with an additional tool to protect and expand agricultural land holdings by allowing the corporation to acquire real property through condemnation when necessary will help prevent agricultural lands from being sold for non-agricultural development and ensure they remain available for agricultural production. Any land acquisitions made under this authority must align with the state's broader agricultural goals. It is important to prioritize lands suitable for diversified agriculture, ensure that acquired lands are actively farmed, and provide long-term, affordable leases to bona fide farmers. Water resources must also be secured to support productive farming operations.

With the growing need to increase agricultural self-sufficiency and ensure that farmlands remain dedicated to farming, this measure represents an important step in safeguarding Hawai'i's agricultural future. We urge the committee to pass this bill to support the preservation and expansion of agricultural lands in Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

SB-746-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 1:13:32 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/12/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition **SUPPORTS!**

SB-746-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 10:58:27 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/12/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nickolas Olarti	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Representative Chair Kirstin Kahloa

Representative Vice Chair. Matthias Kusch

House Committee on Agriculture and Food systems

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

9:00A, Room 325 via Video Conference

Hawai'i State Capitol

Support for S.B. No. 746 SD2

Aloha, Chair Gates and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Foodsystems. My name is Nickolas Olarti and I am a student at Mililani High School. I am testifying in support of S.B.No. 746 SD2

I believe this bill is necessary to save our coconut trees and in turn restore coconut productions that build food security. A mature coconut tree in Oahu can produce anywhere from 30 to 75 coconuts per year depending on the growing conditions. These coconuts will be made into thousands of things such as lotion, deserts, candies, medicine and the simple fruit itself. Consequently, farms will make only a few hundred thousand dollars per year at most as it is not a cash crop, but local businesses and farm markets will thrive from it. These local connections have grown over generations as our ancestors utilized coconuts in their culture and lifestyle, with it having multiple uses in crafting and even emergencies. For example, a coconut can be used as an emergency water source if our other sheds are contaminated. Even simple solutions such as insecticides or community searches would be enough of a step to combating the coconut rhinoceros beetles that cause a 50% mortality rate in our trees.

I hope you will consider passing S.B. No. 746 SD2 because it is necessary to move our state towards a more sustainable, securer, and healthy future. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Nickolas Olarti

Mililani High School

SB-746-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 4:22:52 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/12/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jaden Hopkins	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee,

Howdy, Representatives of the Agriculture and Food Systems Committee,

My name is Jaden Hopkins, and I am a student at Mililani High School. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB746, which addresses the growing threat of the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) and strengthens efforts to combat this invasive species.

The CRB poses a serious risk to Hawaii’s coconut palms and other essential plant species, which are not just valuable agricultural resources but also integral to our culture and environment. Without immediate and sustained action, this pest could cause widespread ecological damage, economic losses for farmers, and long-term harm to Hawaii’s biodiversity. This bill provides much-needed funding and resources to detect, control, and ultimately eradicate the CRB before the problem worsens.

Supporting SB746 means protecting Hawaiian agriculture, native ecosystems, and cultural heritage. I urge the committee to pass this bill and invest in the future of Hawaii’s lands and communities.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Please consider my testimony,

Jaden Hopkins

SB-746-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/7/2025 7:06:11 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/12/2025 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

The CRB is an organism that poses a potentially grave threat both to native vegetation, including endangered species, and to food and ornamental crops. The infestation is still small enough to be stopped, but only if we act quickly. Please act quickly, and pass SB746

Testimony in Support of SB746

Submitted by: Tazyah Ayau, Mililani High School Senior

Resident of Mililani, O'ahu (House District 37, Senate District 22)

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed bill addressing the invasive species threat posed by the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB), *Oryctes rhinoceros*. As a resident of Hawai'i, I am deeply concerned about the severe impact this pest has had on our local environment, agriculture, and economy. I recognize that controlling and managing this invasive species is an urgent priority for the well-being of our islands.

The Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle is an invasive pest that has caused significant damage to our coconut palm populations, threatening a staple of Hawai'i's agricultural landscape. The larvae of this beetle bore into the trunks of coconut palms, weakening them to the point of collapse, and making them vulnerable to disease and death. This threat is particularly concerning in Hawai'i, where the coconut palm is not only an economic crop but also a cultural symbol and a vital resource for local communities.

Beyond its impact on coconut production, the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle threatens other palm species found in Hawai'i, which play an essential role in our ecosystems. Palms provide food and shelter for native wildlife, maintain soil health, and contribute to the natural beauty of our islands. The loss of these trees could have far-reaching consequences, potentially altering the structure and function of our local ecosystems.

The economic ramifications of this beetle's spread are significant, especially for those involved in agriculture, tourism, and industries that rely on healthy palm trees. As CRB continues to damage coconut palms, it puts at risk the livelihoods of farmers, ranchers, and local businesses across the state. This situation is already challenging for many residents, and the spread of this invasive pest threatens to worsen the financial stability of the communities most dependent on palm agriculture.

I urge you to take swift and decisive action by passing this bill. The measures outlined in the bill, such as enhanced monitoring, increased resources for eradication, public education, and early detection programs, are crucial to protecting Hawai'i's unique environment and economy. As residents of Hawai'i, we are particularly vulnerable to the rapid spread of invasive species, and I believe that this legislation will play a key role in mitigating the damage caused by the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. I strongly support the swift passage of this bill, which will help safeguard our agricultural industries, preserve our local biodiversity, and protect our island home from the continued threat of invasive species. I am happy to assist in any efforts to combat the spread of the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle and ensure a healthy future for Hawai'i

Sincerely,

Tazyah Ayau

SB-746-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/8/2025 9:32:22 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/12/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emilio Prado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa, Chair

Rep. Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

Wednesday March 12, 2025

9:00 a.m. Conference Room 325

Support for SB746 SD2

Aloha, Chair Gates and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems, My name is Emilio Prado and I am a student at Mililani High School. I am testifying in support of SB746 SD2.

I am testifying in support of the eradication pilot program that incentivizes community members to collect and submit coconut rhinoceros beetles and its larvae for compensation. I believe it is necessary to implement this part of the bill for the health of the environment and well being of our ecosystem. CRB's feed on economically important crops such as sugarcane, pineapples, bananas, etc. The beetle's are invasive and threaten the economy and ecosystem, and it's important that we as a community take the necessary precautions to remove them from our island to ensure the highest chance of rehabilitation. In passing this bill, community members are encouraged to remove CRB's and the ecosystem is given the best chance at not receiving further harm.

I hope you will consider passing SB746 SD2 because it is necessary to move our state towards a more sustainable, eco-friendly, and healthy future. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Emilio Prado

Mililani High School

SB-746-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/9/2025 12:42:16 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/12/2025 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs and members of the Committee,

This bill to provide payments for CRB which are submitted by the public is unlikely to have any significant impact on the population of CRB in the long term. It will likely also motivate people to build mulch piles such that they can harvest larvae for money. It would be impossible to know which larvae turned in come from "human intervention" as the *only intervention need to start a CRB breeding colony is to make a pile of mulch or green waste*. The example of the British government providing payment of cobras is exactly analogous to this situation and is the first example under the wikipedia article for **Perverse incentive** https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perverse_incentive

I strongly recommend not funding this bill and instead using any money earmarked for investment in biocontrol of CRB. There is a reason that CRB is not decimating coconuts in SE Asia and it is the existence of natural enemies which reduce the CRB population. We need these natural enemies imported to Hawai'i as a biocontrol to sustainable manage CRB in the long term.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify for this measure.

Kevin Faccenda, PhD.

SB-746-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 9:21:16 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/12/2025 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Subject: Testimony in Support of SB746

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I strongly support SB746, which addresses the urgent threat of invasive species in Hawai'i. Invasive species harm our environment, agriculture, and native ecosystems, requiring stronger prevention and management efforts. This bill provides essential resources to mitigate their impact and protect Hawai'i's biodiversity.

I urge you to pass SB746 to strengthen our response to this growing threat.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Skye Hyun

skyehyun22@gmail.com

SB-746-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 12:16:34 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/12/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Max Kajiwara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB746- Relating to Invasive Species (Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle)

Chairperson, Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB746, whihc is adressing urgent threat posed bt the Coconut Rhinoceroes Beetle to Hawaii enviornment, economy, and cultrual resources. The invasive pest has already caused significant damage to coconut and pals trees across the islands, endangering Hawaii's unique landscape and industries reliant on healthy ecosystems.

The Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle was found in Hawaii in 2013, and have been trying to contain the beetles. But they continued to threat our agriculture and destroying the ability to grow and reporduce. If thjey were left unchecked, the CBR could lead to a widespread tree loss, affecting everything from toruism and the beauty of the Hawaii culture. While we all rely on the coconut and palm trees.

With the bill we would be able to provide critical funding and resources for enhancing monitoring, researcch and eradicating efforts. Strengthening biodiversity measures, and supporting early detection programs are essential to preventing the spread of the beetles. The CRB do not only affect individual property but the entiere state biodiversity, food security and economy.

I urge the legislate to pass the SB746 to ensure Hawaii has the necessary toold to combat this destructive pest. Wethen can protect our natrual reources and the beauty of our islands.

Sincerely,

Max Kajiwara

Mililani High School

808-517-0885

SB-746-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 12:59:45 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/12/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Madeleine Villar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair Gates and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture,

My name is Madeleine Villar and I am a student at Mililani High School. I am testifying in support of SB746.

I am testifying in support of establishing a 2-year coconut rhinoceros beetle eradication pilot program. Growing up living right next to the royal palm, these palm trees have always been part of my life. Ever since I was younger, I would tell my mom one of my biggest hopes is to take my graduation photos by Royal Palm. These hopes have since been shattered due to the coconut rhinoceros beetle. These palm trees that have been in my community since plantation times and have since been slowly dying over the past 4 years. What began as their leaves falling off the tree has developed into them barely being able to stand by their own. These plants have been part of Wahiawa for over a century, but due to this invasive species this part of our history, our culture, has now faded away. I ask you to approve of this testimony to save other communities before their history gets wiped away.

I hope that you will consider passing SB746, to save our aina before it's too late. Mahalo for the opportunity.

Madeleine Villar

Mililani High School

SB-746-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 1:07:58 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/12/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danica Apilado	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Representative Matthias Kusch, Vice Chair

House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

9:00 AM, House Conference Room 325

Hawai'i State Capitol

Support for S.B. No. 746

Aloha, Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems,

My name is Danica Apilado, and I am a student at Mililani High School. I am testifying in strong support of S.B. No. 746, which establishes a two-year coconut rhinoceros beetle eradication pilot program under the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

The coconut rhinoceros beetle is a dangerous invasive species that threatens Hawai'i's environment, agriculture, and economy. If left unchecked, it could severely damage coconut trees and other important plants, leading to long-term ecological harm. By incentivizing community members to collect and submit these beetles and their larvae, this bill encourages public participation in a critical environmental issue while promoting education and awareness.

This program is a necessary step in protecting Hawai'i's ecosystems from further damage. Additionally, requiring a report to the Legislature ensures that efforts are tracked and evaluated for effectiveness. Investing in proactive measures now will help safeguard Hawai'i's natural resources for future generations.

I urge you to pass S.B. No. 746 to support the eradication of this destructive pest. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Danica Apilado

Student, Mililani High School

Representative Lorraine Inouye, Chair
Representative Mike Gabbard, Chair
Representative Elefante, Vice Chair
Representative Richards, Vice Chair
House of Committee on Agriculture

Wednesday, February 12, 2025
1:05PM, Conference Room 229
Hawaii State Capitol

Support for S.B. NO. 746

Aloha Chair Gates and members of the House of Committee on Agriculture.

My name is Brooke Kurasaki and I am a student in the AP Environmental Science class at Mililani High School. I am testifying in **support of** S.B. NO. 746.

I am specifically testifying in support of the two-year pilot program to incentivize community members to collect these beetles and larvae. I believe it is necessary for there to be an increase in awareness about these invasive species and the harm that they do to our environment. Representative Inouye, I know you are aware of the increase in coconut rhinoceros beetles in our community, which are overtaking our endemic species. These beetles can destroy the biodiversity of our ecosystems and outcompete native species for resources. The two-year pilot program needs to be introduced to help raise awareness about this invasive species, so that we can restore and preserve our endemic species, providing many long-term benefits.

I hope you will consider passing Senate Bill NO. 746 because it is necessary to move our state into a more sustainable, healthy, and environmentally friendly future. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Brooke Kurasaki
Mililani High School

Chair Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa
Vice Chair Rep. Matthias Kusch

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

Support for S.B. No.746

Aloha, Chair Gates and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems,
My name is Malia Wagatsuma and I am a student at Mililani High School. I am testifying
in support of S.B. No.746.

I am testifying specifically in support of treating the invasive species problem regarding the coconut rhinoceros beetle. These beetles pose a large threat to Hawaii's native plants and should be removed in the best possible ways. I believe that this bill finds a great and promising way to involve our community in helping Hawaii's invasive species issue. With the monetary incentive it will help others in our community to focus on this issue. But also with this it can cause problems with people finding ways to create more CRBs for more money. Maybe finding a way that will still incentivize people to remove CRBs from the environment while also making sure that no one takes advantage of the system can help to make this bill a success. I strongly believe that working to take away invasive species from Hawaii will lead to a greater impact and growth in native plants.

I hope you will consider passing S.B. No.746 because it is necessary to move our state back to a place where native species can thrive. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Malia Wagatsuma
Mililani High School

SB-746-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 3:47:04 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/12/2025 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I FULLY SUPPORT this bill.

**It needs to be passed and implimented
URGENTLY.**

SB-746-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 3:55:40 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/12/2025 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

There is never as good a time like the present, as 'they' wisely 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, at this very moment, and during the entire time of your hearing, CRB infestations on Oahu are growing exponentially.

Wish I could say, "*No pressure here!*", but alas, I couldn't, even if I tried.

Please pass this bill. Mahalo.

SB-746-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 4:59:11 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/12/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marcia Kemble	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings Committee Chair and Committee Members,

Please support SB 746 SD2! I am extremely worried about coconut rhinoceros beetles getting so established that they will be impossible to eradicate. A truly alarming number have already been found and our coconut and other palm trees are dying!!

Thank you.

Marcia Kemble

Makiki

SB-746-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 8:32:40 PM

Testimony for AGR on 3/12/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Arianna Martin-Aiona	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony

Greetings, Chair Gates and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture. My name is Arianna Martin-Aiona and I am a student at Mililani High School. I am testifying in support of S.B. No.764.

I am testifying in strong support to reduce the number of invasive species. In this case specifically, the establishment of a two year coconut rhinoceros beetle eradication pilot program which is being done under the Department of Land and Natural resources. In Hawaii, coconut rhinoceros beetles have held a significant threat to our local agriculture and our natural resources. Many people, part of this, propose that immediate action is necessary in order to control and prevent further damage that are caused by these coconut rhinoceros beetles.

The pilot program allows members of the community to collect and submit the coconut rhinoceros beetles, including their larvae for compensation. This is a good way for people to fight and advocate going against these invasive species. By involving people in these communities who truly want change to better our a'ina, we can increase the effectiveness of this program.

I hope you will consider passing S.B. No. 764 because it is necessary in order to protect and preserve Hawaii's natural beauty and our local agriculture..

Thank you for your time,

Arianna Martin-Aiona - Mililani High School



Hawai'i Forest Industry Association

7192 Kalaniana'ole Hwy
Suite A-143A, #249
Honolulu, HI 96825
Phone: 808/933/9411
Email: hfia@hawaiiiforest.org

Date: 03/10/25

TO: AGR Chair Kahaloa and AGR Committee Members

FROM: Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA)

SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of SB746 SD2 Relating to Invasive Species

Dear Chair Kahaloa and AGR Committee Members,

On behalf of the Directors of the Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA), this testimony is in support of SB746 SD2 Relating to Invasive Species.

The Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA) supports establishing a pilot program to eradicate Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. Considering that Hawaii is known as the "endangered species capital of the world" due to the damaging effects of invasive species on our unique biodiversity, implementing programs to recruit the assistance of community members to combat the inundation of new and/or spreading invasive species is logical. In addition to helping reduce the spread of the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle, a pilot program that invites the community to participate in combative efforts against this threat also helps to educate the public and raise awareness about the very real threats invasive species pose to our fragile habitats. Monitoring for and protecting against the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle also helps to protect our agricultural land, our forested land, our ranch and pasture lands, and the economies tied to all three. For these reasons HFIA hopes that you will support SB746 SD2.

Mahalo,

Guy Cellier, President
Hawai'i Forest Industry Association

HFIA's mission is to promote healthy and productive forests and a sustainable forest industry through management, education, planning, information exchange, and advocacy. HFIA has over 130 members including woodworkers, landowners, sawyers, foundations, foresters, growers, educators, environmentalists, architects, millers, ranchers, and others interested in HFIA's mission and goals.

HFIA Board of Directors

Officers: President Guy Cellier, Vice President Irene Sprecher, Secretary Taylor Coons, Treasurer Wade Lee
Directors: Jeremy Campbell, Doug Gordon, Nicholas Koch, Michael Sowards, Aileen Yeh

Chair Rep. Kirstin Kahaloa
Vice Chair Rep. Matthias Kusch

Monday, March 10, 2025
10:52AM, House Conference Room 325
Hawaii State Capital

Support for H.B. No.746

Aloha, Members of the House Committee on Water and Land,

My name is Autumn Lagafuaina and I am a junior at Mililani High School. I am testifying in support of H.B. No.746

I am testifying for this bill specifically in support of the eradication of the coconut beetles. Growing up here native to this beautiful land, it is devastating to see our land get invaded by species that do nothing but destroy what is important to us. The crops especially that have fed our ancestors and date back to cultural practices that have deep meaning to not only me but to other native Hawaiians as well. I hope to see the passing of this bill because the protection of the plants balances our ecosystem and is also deep rooted into the culture of Hawai'i.

I hope you will consider passing H.B. No.746 because the health of our land is very important to me as I see myself and my future generations thriving on these islands. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Autumn Lagafuaina
Mililani High School



MELISSA VOMVORIS

melissavomvoris@gmail.com

Testimony in Support

SB746 SD2 RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Wednesday, March 12, 2025 – 9:00am – CR325

Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee:

I strongly support SB746 SD2, which establishes a two-year coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) eradication pilot program that incentivizes community members to collect and submit beetles and larvae for compensation.

The coconut rhinoceros beetle poses an existential threat to Hawaii's iconic palm trees and numerous other culturally and economically important plants. Since its discovery at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in 2013, the beetle has spread throughout Oahu and to Kauai, Maui, and Hawaii Island despite control efforts. The beetle's devastating impact on our native loulu palms, coconut palms, and other vegetation threatens our ecosystems, cultural practices, agricultural sector, and tourism industry.

While some previous testimony has expressed concerns about the implementation of a compensation program, I believe these concerns are outweighed by the urgent need for innovative approaches:

1. **Regarding concerns about compensation being exploited:** The bill specifically includes language in Section 3(b) stating "in no event shall the department compensate any person for collecting or submitting any beetle or larva that was bred by human intervention." This safeguard directly addresses concerns about people breeding beetles for profit. Furthermore, oversight by the Hawaii Invasive Species Council would ensure proper verification processes. The benefits of increased community participation in CRB control far outweigh the administrative challenges.
2. **Regarding statements that integrated pest management (IPM) is more effective:** After 12 years of conventional IPM approaches, the CRB population has continued to expand, not decrease. The reality is that existing strategies alone have proven insufficient. The spread of CRB to neighbor islands in 2023 demonstrates that current approaches have not contained the problem. While IPM remains important, this pilot program offers a complementary approach that directly engages community members in more intensive collection efforts.
3. **Regarding implementation concerns:** The Hawaii Invasive Species Council testimony to WAM actually supports the bill's intent and notes this is "a creative



MELISSA VOMVORIS

melissavomvoris@gmail.com

method to engage and educate the community." Their recommendation for dedicated outreach staff should be incorporated into implementation, not used as a reason to reject the proposal.

As the Maui County Mayor's testimony to the WAM committee states, "**We must seek every option in the management and control of CRB,**" and the Hawaii Farm Bureau correctly points out that "**controlling CRB infestations requires a multi-faceted approach.**" This pilot program represents exactly the kind of **outside-the-box thinking** we need when conventional methods have fallen short.

Given the continued spread of this devastating pest, we need all tools at our disposal. The consequences of inaction will be far more costly than the investment required for this pilot program. **I urge your committee to approve SB746 SD2 and appropriate the necessary funds to implement this community-based initiative to combat the coconut rhinoceros beetle in Hawaii.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important measure.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Vomvoris

SB-746-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 12:18:52 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/12/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Xavier Maull	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair Gates and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture,

My name is Xavier Maull. I am an AP environmental science student at Mililani High School. I am testifying in support of SB746.

The coconut rhinoceros beetle is a destructive invasive species threatening Hawai'i's ecosystems and agriculture. For over a decade it has harmed the wildlife and destroyed habitats. This bill proposes a community-lead way to combat the beetle by incentivizing local involvement. It raises awereness towards the issue and encourages pest control efforts.

I hope you will consider passing SB746. It is a step towards a healthier and safer aina. Mahalo for the opprotunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Xavier Maull
Mililani High School

SB-746-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 1:46:59 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/12/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Calvin Carlisle	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Invasive species as a whole has negatively effected habitats and hindered the ability of native species to survive. The coconut rhinoceros beetle imposes a huge threat to our local beautiful palm trees as they feed on their heart-shaped leaves, damaging and killing the plant in the process. In many past cases, invasive species feeding on plants or other animals has led to extinction or high a risk of extinction. To see the damage it causes to our environment and palm trees is heartbreaking and needs to end. Only so much damage can be done until there is nothing left. That is why I support the removal and help to eliminate the invasive Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle from our local trees and environment.

SB-746-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 2:55:54 AM

Testimony for AGR on 3/12/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paige Shibuya	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

March 10, 2025

Paige Shibuya

Mililani High School student

Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for SB746, which creates a two-year pilot program to help get rid of the coconut rhinoceros beetle. This bill encourages community members to collect and submit coconut rhinoceros beetle's and their larvae in exchange for compensation.

The coconut rhinoceros beetle is a serious threat to our local plants, especially coconut palms, and can cause significant damage to our environment and economy. We need strong solutions to manage this pest, and this bill offers a great way to get the community involved. By rewarding people for collecting coconut rhinoceros beetle's, we can motivate more people to help out and make a difference.

The compensation is an important part of this program because it encourages people to participate. It also helps raise awareness about the coconut rhinoceros beetle problem and encourages everyone to work together to protect our environment. I also appreciate that the bill includes a requirement for a report to the Legislature, which will help assess how well the program is working and allow for improvements if needed.

In conclusion, I fully support SB746 and believe it is a great step toward addressing the coconut rhinoceros beetle issue while getting the community involved. I encourage the committee to approve this bill so we can move forward with this important program.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Good morning Chair Rep. Kirstin Kahaloe, & Vice Chair Rep. Matthias Kusch, everyone.

I am here to present a two-year plan to effectively combat and eradicate the rhinoceros beetle, which has become a serious threat to our ecosystems and agricultural industries. Over the past few years, the damage caused by these beetles has worsened, especially to palm trees and other valuable crops. However, with the right combination of strategies, we believe this pest can be eradicated in two years.

Our approach will consist of three key phases. First, we will implement widespread monitoring and trapping of adult beetles in affected areas, using pheromone traps and other targeted methods to reduce their population. In the second phase, we will focus on biological control by introducing natural predators of the beetle, such as certain types of parasitic wasps. Finally, we will launch an educational campaign to inform local farmers and communities about preventative measures, including the proper disposal of beetle-infested materials and safe pesticide use.

By combining these efforts and working closely with experts, farmers, and communities, we are confident that we can significantly reduce, if not completely eradicate, the rhinoceros beetle within two years. The success of this plan will not only help protect our environment but also safeguard the livelihoods of countless individuals who depend on agriculture. Thank you.