

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
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

Before the House Committee on
AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Wednesday, January 29, 2025
9:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 325 and Via Videoconference

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JOSH GREEN, 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 HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

JANUARY 29, 2025
9:30 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 325

HOUSE BILL NO. 643
RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 643 relating to the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) program. The bill establishes short-term management initiatives for the CRB response program and appropriates funds for activities and positions related to CRB infestation control.

The Department is in strong support of this measure. The University of Hawai'i works in close collaboration with the Department. Additionally, the short-term management initiatives and financial support for control and mitigation of CRB statewide are imperative to ensure the continuation of prioritized research and implementation of projects the CRB response program has initiated.

Although the Department supports all the short-term management initiatives provided in the bill, the Department has several comments related to those initiatives:

- While there are voluntary best management practices to mitigate and control CRB such as protective netting, other practices such as pesticide application are regulated by State and Federal laws. The Department's Pesticides Branch may be able to assist with the annual workshops and training opportunities.



- More specific details related to the residential subsidy should be included, such as ensuring the treatments are certified as effective against CRB, defining the maximum reimbursement per tree treated, and defining the total amount an individual is eligible for reimbursement.
- Regarding the canine inspections, the Department suggests changing “cooperation” to “coordination”. Regulatory authority to stop the movement of a potentially infested commodity is with the Department’s Plant Quarantine Branch at the ports of entry.
- Currently, there are no approved fumigation treatments of high-risk commodities such as containerized mulch and compost for interisland movement. The only approved treatment for moving mulch and compost within the State is heat treatment. The Department is currently working with stakeholders to determine the efficacy of alternative fumigants. Should an additional fumigant be deemed effective at eradicating all CRB life stages, details related to the container fumigation subsidy should be provided to ensure the treatments are certified as effective against CRB, define the maximum reimbursement per treatment, and define the total amount an entity is eligible for reimbursement.
- As this bill is short-term in nature, the biocontrol research funding associated with the creation of positions must work in direct partnership with the Department’s Plant Pest Control Branch, specifically the Biocontrol Section to ensure continuity.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
January 29, 2025 at 9:30 a.m.

By

Parwinder Grewal, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

HB 643 – RELATED TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM

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

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

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

UHM-CTAHR views this bill as an important effort to develop State support for the CRB Response program. One amendment/clarification is suggested for Section 3 (5), which allocates unspecified funds for subsidizing fumigation. The use of the only fumigant, sulfuryl fluoride, has very recently been discontinued pending further evaluation. There are no current alternatives for fumigation of high-risk materials traveling between islands. Researchers at UHM-CTAHR are collaborating with the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA) and a local pest control company to evaluate an alternative fumigant in February 2025. UHM-CTAHR can only support Section 3 (5) when an effective fumigant is approved by the HDOA Plant Quarantine Branch.

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

JOSH GREEN
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

1151 PUNCHBOWL ST, #325
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

VOTING MEMBERS

DAWN CHANG
DEPARTMENT OF LAND & NATURAL
RESOURCES

SHARON HURD
HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

KATHLEEN HO, D.Env
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

PARWINDER GREWAL, Ph.D.
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

MARY ALICE EVANS
BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT &
TOURISM

DEXTER KISHIDA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

House Committee on AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

9:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 325 and Via Videoconference

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

COUNTY COUNCIL

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



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

Jade K. Fountain-Tanigawa, County Clerk
Lyndon M. Yoshioka, Deputy County Clerk

Telephone: (808) 241-4188
Facsimile: (808) 241-6349
Email: cokcouncil@kauai.gov

Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawai'i 96766

January 27, 2025

**TESTIMONY OF FERN HOLLAND
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON
HB 427, RELATING TO BIOSECURITY AND
HB 643, RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM
House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems
Wednesday, January 29, 2025
9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 325
Via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of HB 427, Relating to Biosecurity and HB 643, Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kaua'i County Council.

Regarding HB 427, it is imperative to support all efforts to enhance biosecurity in Hawai'i. Our state is significantly behind in this area and is recognized as one of the most heavily invaded ecosystems globally. The urgent need for a comprehensive and effective biosecurity system cannot be overstated. For years, I have strongly advocated for strengthening biosecurity measures to safeguard our communities, environment, and way of life. On behalf of Kaua'i and its people, I continue this advocacy today. Investing in biosecurity now will yield long-term cost savings, protect our environment, preserve cultural practices, and honor our history. I urge you to support all measures aimed at establishing and expanding robust biosecurity initiatives for Hawai'i.

Regarding HB 643, Kaua'i is currently facing a severe and rapidly escalating infestation of Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles (CRB). This invasive species poses one of the most significant threats we have encountered in recent years. It jeopardizes critical agricultural crops, culturally significant sites, and native plant species, including endemic Loulu (*Pritchardia* palms), Hala (*Pandanus*), and the historical groves along the Royal Coconut Coast. Additionally, CRB threatens the iconic tropical landscape that defines Kaua'i and Hawai'i. The potential economic impact of this infestation on Kaua'i is staggering. To mitigate this crisis, it is essential to implement a unified and comprehensive approach, including immediate eradication efforts, robust biosecurity actions, education, and long-term biological control strategies. We must act decisively and collaboratively to address this pressing issue. I urge you to support the strongest possible version of HB 643, ensuring adequate funding and resources to combat CRB through immediate response measures and sustainable management solutions. Please prioritize and fast-track efforts to protect Kaua'i's environment, cultural heritage, and economy from this invasive threat.

Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee
Re: HB 427, Relating to Biosecurity and HB 643, Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros
Beetle Program

January 27, 2025

Page 2

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 427 and HB 643. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to cokcouncil@kauai.gov.

Sincerely,

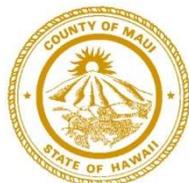
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "FERN HOLLAND", with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

FERN HOLLAND
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

AAO:mn

RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

JOSIAH K. NISHITA
Managing Director



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAI'I 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: January 27, 2025

SUBJECT: SUPPORT OF HB643, RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this measure which establishes short-term management initiatives for the coconut rhinoceros beetle response program. Appropriates funds for activities and positions related to coconut rhinoceros beetle infestation control.

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

1. Immediate as well as long-term management, eradication, and prevention of the spread of CRB (coconut rhinoceros beetle) is foundational to food security, the health and wellness of our 'āina, and sustainability and resilience overall.
2. 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 significantly support our collective management initiatives of this very invasive pest.
3. Our ecological heritage in Hawai'i is negatively impacted by CRB. We must explore every option in the management and control of CRB; from community education to expanding the current CRB response program.

Mahalo for your consideration.

COUNTY COUNCIL

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



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

Jade K. Fountain-Tanigawa, County Clerk
Lyndon M. Yoshioka, Deputy County Clerk

Telephone: (808) 241-4188
Facsimile: (808) 241-6349
Email: cokcouncil@kauai.gov

Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawai'i 96766

January 28, 2025

**TESTIMONY OF FELICIA COWDEN
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON**

HB 643, RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM

House Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

9:30 a.m.

Conference Room 325

Via Videoconference

Dear Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of HB 643, Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kaua'i County Council.

I respectfully ask to have the island of Kaua'i added to the wording on page 4 item 3 to be included with the islands of Hawai'i, Maui, Moloka'i, and Lana'i. Kaua'i is urgently working to eradicate the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle that is now surfacing in various parts of the island including Kekaha, Wailua, and Kilauea. This is a serious threat to Kaua'i's agriculture sector as well as visitor industry.

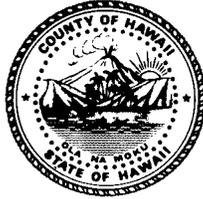
Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 643. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to cokcouncil@kauai.gov.

Sincerely,

FELICIA COWDEN
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

AAO:dmc

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor



Benson Medina
Director

Dennis Lin
Deputy Director

County of Hawai'i

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

25 Aupuni Street, Room 1301 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720-4252
(808) 961-8366 • Fax (808) 935-1205
E-mail: chresdev@co.hawaii.hi.us

January 28, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2025

9:30 AM

CONFERENCE ROOM 325

TESTIMONY ON HB 643

RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and members of the committee:

I am Benson Medina, Director of the Department of Research and Development, County of Hawai'i. One of the agricultural objectives of this department is to "support research, development, control, and education that improves agricultural production, quality, resilience, and producer viability or reduces the impact of pests or disease on agricultural crops, livestock, forests, or the community."

The County of Hawai'i **supports HB 643**, relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program.

The Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) is a serious threat to Hawai'i's scenic coconut palms that enriches the tourists' experience when they visit Hawai'i. CRB's destructive impact is evidenced by the damaged and dead coconut palms seen on the West and Southwest sections of Oahu.

CRB has made its way to Waikoloa on Hawai'i island and its discovery alarms our residents, producers, landscapers, hotels and palm enthusiasts. Hawai'i island is home to palm collections that contain many valuable and endemic species. The hotels and landscapers value their coconut palms to increase the experience for their guests.

CRB has a wide host range that will impact other economic plants. Ulu is a growing staple, and we produce the bulk of the state's bananas. Hala is used for weaving lauhala and is also used in landscaping. They are all potential targets of CRB.

January 28, 2025

Page 2

Hawai'i County is fully committed to stop the spread of the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. We are working with the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture, the Big Island Invasive Species Committee, the landscape and nursery industries. We have committed funds, manpower and equipment to stop its spread. But we need help. HB 643 will provide educational outreach, survey and control response, interdiction and research to provide more control options.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our input on this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Benson Medina". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and a long, sweeping underline.

Benson Medina
Director

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
NALANI BRUN, DIRECTOR



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

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

Before the
**House Committee on Agriculture
And Food Systems**
January 29, 2025, at 9:30 AM
Room 325 & Via Videoconference

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

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

On behalf of the County of Kaua'i's Office of Economic Development, I submit this testimony **in support of the intent of HB643** to strengthen Hawai'i's response to the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) infestation. The bill takes much-needed steps to provide funding for containment, mitigation, and long-term research to combat this devastating pest. However, while the bill acknowledges the presence of CRB on Kaua'i, **it does not currently include specific provisions ensuring Kaua'i receives adequate support.**

As written, the bill provides crucial funding for statewide initiatives such as industry training, canine cargo inspections, and biocontrol research, all of which will benefit Hawai'i as a whole, including Kaua'i. However, the **direct response services outlined in the bill currently prioritize other islands, excluding Kaua'i from immediate assistance despite confirmed infestations.** This omission could hinder our ability to contain the beetle's spread and protect Kaua'i's agriculture, ecosystems, and tourism industry.

Requested Amendments to Ensure Kaua'i's Inclusion:

1. **Explicitly Extend CRB Response Team Services to Kaua'i:**
 - Section 2, Point 3 currently states that the response program will be extended **only to Hawai'i Island, Maui, Moloka'i, and Lāna'i when CRB is detected.**
 - We request an **amendment to explicitly include Kaua'i in this provision** so that response teams can be deployed to assist in monitoring, containment, and eradication efforts in our county.
2. **Clarify the Equitable Distribution of Funds Across All Islands:**
 - The bill provides funding for canopy treatments, inspections, and fumigation subsidies but does not specify how these resources will be allocated among the counties.
 - We request **clear language ensuring equitable distribution of funds based on the level of infestation risk and need on each island, including Kaua'i county.**
3. **Ensure Kaua'i Benefits from Research and Outreach Efforts:**
 - The bill establishes workshops and public outreach efforts but does not detail how these will be coordinated across islands.

- We recommend **language requiring targeted outreach and education efforts on Kaua'i, particularly for landscapers, farmers, and residents in affected areas.**

Why Kaua'i Must Be Included in the Response Efforts:

- The **windward side of Kaua'i already has significant and growing CRB infestations**, and immediate intervention is critical to preventing widespread damage.
- Kaua'i's **agricultural economy and tourism sector heavily depend on healthy palm species (primary CRB food sources)**, as well as secondary CRB food sources, and failure to act now could lead to long-term economic consequences.
- The inter-island spread of CRB is a growing concern, and **excluding Kaua'i from direct response efforts increases the risk of further infestations statewide.**

Conclusion:

We strongly support the intent of this bill and appreciate the State's commitment to tackling the CRB crisis. However, we urge the committee to amend the bill to explicitly include Kaua'i in the deployment of CRB response teams and to clarify how funding and resources will be fairly allocated across all affected islands. These changes will ensure that Kaua'i, along with the rest of Hawai'i, receives the necessary tools to combat this destructive pest effectively.

Mahalo for your time and consideration of these requested amendments.



House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems
Wednesday, January 29, 2025
9:30 AM Conference Room 325
State Capitol

Testimony in Support of HB643

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee,

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) is **in strong support of HB643, Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program**, which provides funding to the University of Hawaii to support Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) Response. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is ending its funding for CRB Response. Stable support from the State for CRB Response is necessary for continuing work in service to communities and cooperating agencies and can be used to leverage additional Federal funding.

For over a decade, CRB Response has worked to protect Hawaii's communities, industries, and natural environment from the threats and impacts of CRB. CRB Response provides education, awareness, detection, prevention, and treatments to meet these goals and is staffed by CRB experts who work full-time to address the impacts of CRB across Hawaii.

The CRB Response was established as an emergency response under the incident command system (ICS) after CRB was first detected on Oahu in 2013. They are a grant-funded organization managed through the University of Hawaii's Agrosecurity Lab under the direction of Dr. Michael Melzer. Multiple grant sources including USDA, Department of Defense (DOD), and Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) have supported the CRB Response Team through the Research Corporation of the University of Hawaii. This structure has allowed the CRB Response to provide the University of Hawaii's research expertise, fieldwork, and extension/outreach to help guide the response to this pest.

The CRB Response succeeded in keeping CRB populations contained to the initial detection region on O'ahu for more than 5 years despite the delay in regulatory actions to manage the intrastate (on-island) movement of palms, greenwaste, compost, and other materials known to be used by CRB. The CRB Response has also been integral to the responses to CRB on Kaua'i, Maui, and Hawai'i Island.

In addition to this work, CRB Response has been looking at longer-term management solutions including the testing of a CRB-specific biological control that has been effective elsewhere at reducing the impacts of CRB. This work is the best hope for niu, native endangered loulou palms, and other important plants affected by CRB.

For all these reasons we strongly support HB643. Mahalo for the opportunity to support the bill and for 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



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

January 29, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON HB 643
RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
9:30 AM

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

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

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

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:48:34 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---|---------------------------|----------------|
| Chance Correa | Malama 'aina landscape & masonry design llc | Oppose | In Person |

Comments:

- 1) Proposed solution to management practices seems to be only pesticides no organic options trees or mulch management methods.
- 2) \$160k to spray residential palms again with pesticides is alarming to say the least that's is our main supply of seed stock, emergency food & water. We have limited amount natural resources
- 3) The community has made a bigger impact in bringing awareness, management practices then government in the last 10 years.
- 4)CRB is a threat to more than just coconut trees but sustainability as we know it. High risk cargo inter Island should be halted until significant progress is made on mitigating.
- 5) Why fumigation and move materials? Why not Source mulch or soil from each island instead of moving it around.
- 6) Also why are we keeping permanent positions for research with no solution other than Chemical applications? What's next are we going to poison banana trees, and kalo as they are next on the CRB dinner menu as palm tree numbers start to dwindle.



House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems
Wednesday, January 29, 2025
9:30 AM Conference Room 325
State Capitol

SUBJECT: Testimony in Strong Support of HB643 “Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) Program”

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

I am writing in strong support of HB643 “Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program” on behalf of the O’ahu Invasive Species Committee (OISC).

The CRB Response Program has all of the expertise and experience necessary to continue leading Statewide efforts to limit the spread and impacts of the dangerous CRB. Despite the species becoming widespread on O’ahu and spreading to neighboring islands, the CRB team contained this palm-destroying species to the original infestation site for over five years. It was only when temporary regulations limiting the spread of breeding material expired and were not renewed in a timely fashion that this species fully established on O’ahu and then spread to other islands. This bill will be crucial in providing the necessary resources to research long-term solutions, provide on the ground management, and continue with important outreach and public awareness objectives.

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

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:18:48 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Tiffani Keanini | Kauai Invasive Species Committee | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments: Testimony in support of HB643

BIISC
23 E. Kawili St.
Hilo, HI 96720
(808) 933-3340
www.biisc.org



January 28, 2025

Hearing: House Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems

RE: HB643

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

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

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

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

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

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

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Kawehi Young
Public Outreach Coordinator
Big Island Invasive Species Committee

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/23/2025 1:31:00 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Lynn Murakami Akatsuka | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I strongly support the passage of HB 643 this legislative session. It is a preventive program through education, early intervention and eradication of the coconut rhinoceros beetle that exists on some of the islands. We don't want this pest beetle to establish itself permanently like the coqui frog problem in the islands, e.g., Big Island.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support for the funding of HB 643.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/25/2025 10:00:46 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Uilani Naipo | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments: Support.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 10:46:54 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Kris Bordessa | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Stopping the coconut rhinoceros beetle is critical to keeping Hawaii agriculture productive.
Please support HB 643.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 6:58:43 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Meg Reesor | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I very much support HB643 as someone who lives in an area of Hawai'i Island which is very much dependent on agriculture as a way of life and for business. I've seen the devastation of CRB and it's many impacts on local people and businesses on Oahu and know it would be that much worse for Big Island. We are already heavily impacted by so many invasives that it's hard to keep up. CRB is already in Waikoloa village which does not have the best habitat for CRB, but it is likely to make its way to Hilo side where people not only value their palms, bananas, and Halas for their aesthetic value but also their intrinsic value. My entire neighborhood relies on mulch and compost for their at-home gardens or agricultural production which would be the perfect breeding ground for CRB. I support HB643 and it's many initiatives such as biocontrol research and extending work to other island in order to curb the spread of CRB.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 7:29:15 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Liat Portner | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Vice Chair,

I am writing in support of HB643 to establish short-term management initiatives for the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) response program and appropriate funds for activities and positions related to CRB infestation control. Both coconuts and loulou are valuable--culturally, biologically and economically. Whenever I drive past the coconut grove along the Peacock Flats access road I am floored by the rows of dead coconut trees. And just this weekend I went for a hike in the Northern Ko'olau mountains and my heart dropped at the dead loulou I saw from the trail. This type of support is crucial to address the known impact of CRB on these plants, and the potential impact to other native plants.

Mahalo nūnui

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 7:54:00 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| jessica hughes | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Saving our coconut trees is an extremely important issue that everyone who lives here should take seriously. The current traps the invasive species commity have are only 15% effective. Thats not good. The tree trimmers are saying most trees have them. They move from tree to tree using scent so there should be some kind of way to trap them all. Also chrysanthemums were mentioned as a natural deterrent. Coconut trees effect the agriculture and tourism industry. There uses and benefits are endless when you really look into it. inserting the poison that doesn't let you eat form it for a year seems like it will just make it affect the trees we do harvest. Do we know if the invasive green parrots are eating them and that's why they aren't as present in Koloa as they are in Kapaa? I think we should see if any of the high schoolersor college students or even anyone to come up with a method to eradicate them for some kind of scholarship money or something. Many minds working together get things done.

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kiana Otsuka, and I am a concerned O'ahu resident writing in strong support of **HB643**, relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program, which provides funding to the University of Hawai'i to support Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) Response. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is ending its funding for CRB Response, thus stable support from the State for CRB Response is necessary for continuing work in service to communities and cooperating agencies and can be used to leverage additional Federal funding.

Funding our CRB response is the best hope for niu, native endangered lo'ulu palms, and other important plants affected by CRB.

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

Mahalo,

Kiana Otsuka

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 8:54:51 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Reid | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am in favor of this bill and believe the CRB response is better suited to handle these tasks than any other organization. This is coming from a former HDOA plant quarantine inspector and current CRB response team worker. I have just gotten back from Waikoloa, Big island and am worried about the future of the surrounding islands. I don't want them to end up like Guam or some parts of Oahu.

The team at CRB is full of passionate hard working individuals who care about our Aina. I'm certain they possess the skill and expertise to fully combat the CRB. I personally think that combining current treatments from the CRB response team and preventative measures from our community is key to controlling this pest.

Lastly, I'd like to express my disappointment in what HDOA has been doing so far and don't believe they can handle taking on another pest when they can't handle what's already here like the LFA, CBB, Coqui, and avocado lacebug. I am in favor of the CRB Response for these reasons. Thank you.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 9:23:28 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Chelle C Pahinui | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha,

I STRONGLY Support 643 HB RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM.

Please support this vital work. I have lost 2 coconut 15 year old productive trees to these beetles. They are also attacking the bannanas. These beetles need to be completely irradiated while it may still be possible.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Chelle Pahinui

Nahenahe Farm, LLC

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 9:28:39 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of HB 643, which provides funding to the University of Hawaii for the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) Response program. With USDA ending its funding, stable state support is essential for continued efforts to protect Hawaii's communities, industries, and environment. The CRB Response has been critical in educating the public, detecting, preventing, and treating CRB infestations across the state. The program's success in containing CRB on Oahu and expanding its efforts to other islands, along with ongoing research into biological controls, is vital for long-term management.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Molly Mamaril

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 9:36:04 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Monica Moore | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Monica Moore, and I am deeply honored to submit this testimony in enthusiastic support of HB643. This crucial bill addresses one of the most pressing ecological challenges facing our islands: the infestation of the coconut rhinoceros beetle (*Oryctes rhinoceros*).

This invasive pest threatens not just our environment but also the very essence of Hawai‘i’s identity—our agricultural economy, cultural heritage, and natural beauty. Palms, iconic symbols of our islands, are foundational to our landscapes, traditions, and livelihoods. Losing them would mean losing a vital part of what makes Hawai‘i unique.

I have personally seen the dedication and expertise of the team at the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Response Program. Their tireless efforts to research and implement innovative solutions inspire hope in the fight against this devastating pest. My close friend works directly within this program, and I have come to understand not just the science but also the immense heart and commitment they bring to this critical mission.

HB643 is more than a funding request—it is an opportunity to secure Hawai‘i’s future. The provisions in this bill, from subsidizing treatments for residential palms to investing in biocontrol research, reflect a strategic and forward-thinking approach. The \$200,000 proposed for full-time research positions is not just an expense; it’s an investment in the future of our ecosystems and economy. Similarly, the \$250,000 allocated for canine inspections will safeguard uninfested islands and prevent the costly spread of the beetle.

I urge this committee to recognize that we are at a pivotal moment. Emergency federal funding is ending, and we must take responsibility to sustain and expand the program’s essential work. Without immediate and stable support, we risk undoing a decade of progress and losing the resources we need to combat this invasive species effectively.

Please pass HB643 and demonstrate your commitment to protecting Hawai‘i’s natural and cultural heritage. On behalf of my community and those working tirelessly on the front lines, mahalo nui loa for your consideration and leadership.

Respectfully,
Monica Moore

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 10:12:51 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Dylan davis | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

My name is Dylan Davis, a conservationist with about 10 years of experience in the field, and I support HB643. I believe the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle program has been significantly underfunded through the entirety of its existence. Considering the dramatic spread of the beetle in recent years, a significant increase in resources must be made available for any hope of effectively mitigating growing damage.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 10:19:18 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this measure as CRB is a noxious pest which needs more resources to effectively manage.

However, I do not agree with section 3 (2) " \$160,000 for subsidizing canopy treatments for residential palm owners".

Canopy treatments of trees is effective for saving a tree, but is not an effective management tool for CRB as the beetles breed in mulch piles, not trees. The equity of how these treatments would be distributed across the islands is also not defined and seems very difficult to decide who should get state subsidized funding for a treatment which only affects the owner of the trees.

I strongly suggest deleting this line item and reappropriating the 160K to biocontrol research as a biocontrol, once developed and released will be self sustaining and thus not a drain on the taxpayer. A biocontrol is also the only real long-term management strategy for CRB on Kaua'i and O'ahu. CRB is native to Thailand, yet their coconuts are healthy and much of the coconut milk or water in Hawai'i is imported from there, this is due to natural enemies (biocontrol) of CRB in that region.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify,

Kevin Faccenda, PhD

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 10:21:50 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Steve Rohrmayr | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

The should have / could have been taken care of 13 years ago but was allowed to spread across O`ahu from Joint Base on the AirForce side.

That said the State must do MUCH more than they have in the past to eliminate the CRB. I have 2 acres in Wai`anae and over 100 different kinds of palm growing including a number of the Hawaiian Pritchardia's. At least 7 different kinds of palms have been attacked by the CRB.

I've spent a few hundred dollars already on chemicals to kill them and purchased 4 traps. From May to Nov. I caught 79 CRB. None have been caught since Mid Nov. I'm hoping my traps AND THE FERAL CHICKENS which moved in a couple of months ago are doing the job. I've only "lost" one Pritchardia and because I waited to long to use the poison.

I hope passing this bill will give the State more resorces to eliminate the CRB.

Mahalo

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 11:51:02 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

My name is Julie Kuo and an O‘ahu resident writing in strong support of **HB643**,

relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program, which provides funding to the University of Hawai‘i to support Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) Response. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is ending its funding for CRB Response, thus stable support from the State for CRB Response is necessary for continuing work in service to communities and cooperating agencies and can be used to leverage additional Federal funding.

Funding our CRB response is the best hope for niu, native endangered lo‘ulu palms, and other important plants affected by CRB.

Mahalo nui loa for your time and the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB643.

Sincerely,

Julie Kuo

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 12:22:51 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Briana | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Good morning chair and committee members,

I am Briana, a concerned citizen in support of HB643. The devastation an invasive species can cause is life altering for all of us. Please educate the public and provide funds in order to protect our islands. If given the proper resources and knowledge, we can all play our part in protecting our beautiful islands.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

-Briana

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 1:48:23 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Irene Hamasaki | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am in support of Bill HB 643 because I am in the travel industry and believe in preserving our beautiful coconut trees as they are staple to Hawaii tourism. CRB program is essential in eradicating this invasive species and I feel their methods are effective and sustainable. I also have personal experience where I witnessed a CRB eradication and felt that it was the most safest and healthiest method.

Therefore, I respectfully request that you pass this bill HB 643. Mahalo

Irene

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 6:48:49 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Asia B | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am in favor of this bill and believe the CRB response team is better equipped to handle this task. In order to control the pest and to prevent the islands from looking like Guam, we need to combine current CRB practices with preventive measures from the community.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 6:57:50 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Randall Hamasaki | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

My testimony is in support of HB 643.

I am a concerned citizen. I grow bananas and taro for family use on Hawaii Island.

The CRB Response Program will conduct activities that will mitigate current infestations and reduce the risk of further spread of the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB). These activities include Educating tree trimmers and others in the landscape industry via workshops, Subsidizing tree canopy treatments to homeowners, Extending the CRB Response to Hawaii Island and to Maui, Molokai and Lanai if CRB is detected and Conducting canine inspections and treatments of high-risk material moving between islands.

It is critical that the CRB be controlled now on Hawaii Island and the infestions on Oahu be controlled to prevent further spread.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide input.

Randall Hamasaki

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 7:04:23 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Adrianna Dupriest | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

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

My name is Adrianna Dupriest, and I am a former resident of Guam, a current graduate researcher, and someone who has witnessed firsthand the devastating impact of the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) on an island’s ecosystem, culture, and economy. I am here today to offer my strong support for the establishment of short-term management initiatives and the appropriation of funds for the coconut rhinoceros beetle response program.

Growing up on Guam, I have seen how integral coconut trees are to our way of life. As a symbol of our heritage, they provided food, shelter, and materials for traditional practices. I have unfortunately watched as coconut rhinoceros beetles destroyed coconut palms on Guam, leaving behind a trail of devastation that affects not only our environment but also our cultural identity and tourism industry.

As a graduate researcher, I am deeply invested in finding solutions to combat the CRB infestation. My work focuses on molecular-based strategies for eradication and control. However, research alone is not enough. The establishment of short-term management initiatives and the allocation of funds to CRB control efforts are critical to our success in combatting CRB as well.

The coconut rhinoceros beetle is not just a Hawaii problem—it is a regional threat. If left unchecked, it will continue to spread, causing damage to other Pacific islands and beyond. By investing in this program, we are not only protecting Hawaii's natural resources but also contributing to a larger effort to safeguard biodiversity and culture in the Pacific.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I hope you will consider the long-term benefits of this program for Hawaii.

Respectfully,
Adrianna Dupriest
Graduate Researcher

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 7:22:45 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Kristen Gaines | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to testify my support for HB643 concerning biocontrol of coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB). I have a master's degree in entomology and an extensive background in molecular work, and this bill proposes an approach to CRB that would afford the state of Hawai'i a strong defensive tactic against damage and spread of CRB. The use of biological controls as a technology against invasive pests is not entirely new and it should already be in Hawai'i's arsenal, where invasive pests are a primary issue not only for the state itself and its native resources but where US and global trade are also implicated. Reducing pesticide use by adopting an approach suggested in this bill is also of primary concern for Hawai'i whose land is limited and whose watersheds must be protected for posterity. Additionally, the current use of pesticides to combat CRB make palm products inedible and utilizing a biological control would maintain the marketability of high value commodities. It is imperative to act swiftly and approve this bill for the future of Hawai'i as well as its economy.

Mahalo for your time,

Kristen Gaines

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 7:27:45 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| L M B | Private | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support HB643 because it supports and funds the work of helping remove and control the spread of the invasive coconut rhinoceros beetle from the beautiful islands of Hawai'i. We do need to establish short term management for the CRB Response program and appropriate more funds to support CRB Response activities and the people that work in the CRB team. I've spoken to other citizens in my community who support and appreciate the efforts the CRB team is doing and how they are thankful Hawaii has a team dedicated to trying to eradicate and control the invasive species. The more funding we put and the more support we have into supporting the CRB response program will positively impact Hawaii and will be a true testament to the phrase "Mālama 'Āina".

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 7:39:57 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Angelica Unpingco | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I strongly support HB 427, particularly its provisions related to the funding of the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) Response Program. This bill reflects a crucial step in addressing one of the most significant threats to the health and sustainability of Hawaii’s native ecosystems. By appropriating funds for the CRB program, it underscores the importance of proactive, comprehensive management in preventing the spread of invasive species that threaten our environment, economy, and cultural heritage. As Hawaii’s unique environment faces constant pressure from invasive pests, it is critical that we invest in effective management strategies to mitigate these threats before they escalate.

The establishment of short-term management initiatives for the CRB infestation embodies the spirit of mālama ‘Āina — to care for the land. Our native forests, agricultural industries, and even the cultural practices that are deeply connected to the land are all at risk if we do not act decisively. Invasive species like the CRB pose a significant threat not only to our natural resources but also to the livelihoods of farmers and the preservation of our island’s biodiversity. Ensuring that we have the resources to respond quickly and effectively to this issue is an investment in the future of Hawaii’s environment and its people.

By supporting this bill, we are taking tangible steps to protect the aina that sustains us all. This funding is an expression of our collective responsibility to mālama the land, ensuring that Hawaii’s ecosystems remain vibrant for future generations. I urge lawmakers to support HB 427, as it will provide the necessary resources and framework to combat the spread of the CRB and other invasive species, ultimately helping to preserve Hawaii’s precious natural resources.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 7:42:09 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

The CRB response team has been instrumental in managing CRB. This is no small task and the CRB response team has done well with all the facets of the response to minimize the impacts of CRB as best as possible (which to me means keeping it restricted to Oahu). While CRB has been found on other islands in the past year, the CRB team has done well to respond and beetle numbers seem to be decreasing on the other islands. This team should continue to lead the response to battle this horrible pest.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 7:42:37 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire | Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Members of the Hawaii State Legislature,

I have reviewed your bill in its entirety and found many gaps in the bill to go into practical implication, as most illegal contraband are coming through the ports (shipping and air) without any Customs & Border Patrol CBP, as seen on National Geographic TV "How To Catch A Smuggler." In light of this, I redrafted your bill being inclusive of All Alien Invasive Species, not only Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles for better environmental protection.

Here's an updated version of House Bill No. 643 with funding appropriations for the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE) of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to inspect smuggled goods through shipping containers and private airports:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES H.B. NO. 643 THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025

STATE OF HAWAII

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE MANAGEMENT OF ALIEN INVASIVE SPECIES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that alien invasive species pose significant threats to Hawaii's unique ecosystems, agriculture, and cultural heritage. These species, including but not limited to *Oryctes rhinoceros* (the coconut rhinoceros beetle), can cause irreversible damage, alter habitats, and introduce diseases, impacting native flora and fauna, agricultural produce, and the state's economy.

The legislature acknowledges the complexity of managing invasive species, especially with the potential for new species introductions via smuggling through various entry points like shipping containers and private airports. The response to these threats requires a coordinated, multi-agency approach.

The purpose of this Act is to: (1) Establish comprehensive management initiatives for invasive species; (2) Appropriate funds to support these expanded activities across multiple agencies; and (3) Ensure sustainable practices for the long-term management of invasive species.

SECTION 2. In its response to alien invasive species, the University of Hawaii, along with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE) of the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and other relevant agencies, shall incorporate the following initiatives:

(1) Comprehensive Training and Certification:

- Education and certification programs for professionals in agriculture, pest control, and related fields on invasive species management, with annual workshops on each island. A public database of certified professionals will be available online.

(2) Subsidized Treatment Programs:

- Funding for treatment subsidies for affected residents and farmers, focusing on both residential and agricultural impacts.

(3) Island-Wide Response Readiness:

- Extending response capabilities for rapid deployment to any island upon detection of invasive species.

(4) Enhanced Cargo and Airport Surveillance:

- Implementing enhanced inspections for cargo moving between islands and through private airports to prevent the spread of invasive species:
 - DOLE: Will conduct inspections at ports and shipping containers.
 - DOCARE of DLNR: Will focus on conservation areas and natural resource protection.
 - CBP: Will focus on inspecting private airports and international cargo.

(5) Fumigation and Control Measures:

- Subsidizing environmentally friendly control measures for high-risk materials, including fumigation.

(6) Research and Biocontrol Development:

- Research into biocontrol options for various invasive species, ensuring host-specificity tests and environmental impact assessments.

SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$1,350,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 to be allocated as follows:

(1) \$100,000 for training and certification programs by the University of Hawaii.

(2) \$150,000 for subsidizing treatments for residents affected by invasive species.

(3) \$300,000 for extending response teams' deployment across all islands by the University of Hawaii.

(4) \$200,000 for enhanced cargo inspections by the University of Hawaii.

(5) \$100,000 for subsidizing environmentally friendly control measures.

(6) \$200,000 for 2 full-time equivalent (2 FTE) positions for invasive species research by the University of Hawaii.

(7) \$150,000 for DOLE to increase inspections at ports and shipping containers.

(8) \$150,000 for DOCARE of DLNR to enhance conservation efforts related to invasive species.

(9) \$150,000 for CBP to enhance inspections at private airports and international cargo handling, subject to federal cooperation and matching funds.

The sums appropriated shall be expended by the respective agencies for the purposes of this Act, with an annual audit to ensure funds are used as intended.

SECTION 4. This Act shall also establish:

- An oversight committee including representatives from all involved agencies, community stakeholders, environmental groups, and experts in invasive species to review the program's progress, fund utilization, and environmental impact annually.

- A public reporting system where all research, outcomes, and expenditure details related to invasive species management are made transparent and accessible online.

SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.

INTRODUCED BY:

Report Title: Invasive Species; Prevention; University of Hawaii; DOLE; DOCARE of DLNR; CBP; Appropriation; Oversight; Transparency

Description: Expands the scope to manage all alien invasive species with multi-agency involvement, including funding for enhanced inspections at ports, shipping containers, private airports, and conservation areas, promotes transparency, and ensures environmental considerations.

This version of the bill now includes specific funding for DOLE, DOCARE of DLNR, and CBP, aiming to fortify Hawaii's defenses against the introduction and spread of invasive species across multiple entry points and natural habitats.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 7:46:13 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sara Gabrielson | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support HB 643 to allocate funding for CRB management initiatives. It is important that the bill includes education for arborists and landscapers, expansion of efforts to other islands as CRB is identified there, and subsidizes fumigation of potentially contaminated shipments. Thank you for supporting this bill.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:15:30 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Amy Tsuneyoshi | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha, I'm writing in support of HB643.

Thank you,

Amy Tsuneyoshi

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:15:48 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please provide funding to respond to CRB! I hope we can protect our trees, coconut, loulu, and more. Mahalo!

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:16:10 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle is a devastating invasive species that greatly threatens multiple aspects of Hawaiian life, culture, and ecosystems. If allowed to go unchecked, we will have devastating impacts on foundational economic and cultural crops, as well as federally endangered species that will be nearly impossible to reverse. The good news is that the spread of this pest is entirely preventable, if we work together and dedicate resources and energy to controlling it. This is part of our responsibility to protect the people and places of Hawai'i. Do not let this entirely preventable pest fundamentally change Hawai'i.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:21:18 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Candice Johnson | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Hawai`i MUST do better preventing and responding to invasive species!

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:25:31 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I am writing in to urge support for more efforts to control the coconut rhinoceros infestation in Hawaii.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:25:54 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Talia Portner | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Funding for CRB response is crucial in this phase of management and/or eradication of this pest. We rely on the research and information, best management and control practices that result from funding programs that are working towards a biocontrol of this species and any control methods to manage this pest that has and could impact many palm species and other commercial, agricultural, cultural and environmentally important species.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:26:45 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| piilani schneider | Individual | Oppose | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I oppose poison. Regeneration is where we all need to focus on. For our future generations. YOU have a chance to redirect. Imagine not having the experience of opening a coconut with a grandchild, and drinking the water straight from it. It's a lifestyle here for generations and poison will prevent that experience for our future.

There is a community tackling the CRB naturally. Pay attention to what they testify, lean on their expertise. Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:32:21 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Jena Osmani | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 643, which seeks funding for the management of the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) in Hawaii. This is a time-sensitive issue that demands urgent action, as the continued spread of this invasive pest poses a direct and growing threat to our local agriculture, economy, and the preservation of our native Hawaiian palm species. Our native palm species, many endangered and already struggling due to the impacts of invasive pests and habitat loss, are now at serious risk. If immediate action is not taken, we could face long-term consequences, including the loss of these iconic plants and the disruption of ecosystems that depend on them. It is crucial that we act now to protect Hawaii's unique environment and agricultural resources before the damage becomes irreversible. The funding provided under HB643 will help us address this growing crisis and ensure that we can safeguard our native species and agricultural industry for future generations. I urge you to support this important bill and allocate the necessary resources to combat the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. Our islands' future and the health of our ecosystems depend on it.

House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture and Food Systems
Wednesday, January 29, 2025
9:30 AM Conference Room 325
State Capitol

SUBJECT: Testimony in Strong Support of HB643 “Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) Program”

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

I am writing in strong support of HB643 “Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program.”

The CRB Response Program has all of the expertise and experience to continue leading Statewide efforts to limit the spread and impacts of the dangerous CRB. Despite the species becoming widespread on O‘ahu and spreading to neighboring islands, the CRB team contained this palm-destroying species to the original infestation site for over five years. It was only when temporary regulations limiting the spread of breeding material expired and were not renewed in a timely fashion that this species fully established on O‘ahu and then spread to other islands. This bill will be crucial in providing the necessary resources to research long-term solutions, provide on the ground management, and continue with important outreach and public awareness objectives.

I am 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,

Timothy Sullivan

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:34:56 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Curtis Camacho | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I SUPPORT THIS BILL 100% THESE CRB ARE THE BEST WORKERS I HAVE MET.
FULL OF KNOWLEDGE AND COMITTED TO STOPPING THIS INVASIVE PEST. WE
NEED THIS BILL TO PASS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:38:29 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ian Hamasaki | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

The Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) is one of the most destructive invasive species in Hawaii. The CRB Response Team has done an exceptional job, working tirelessly to provide the community and various organizations with critical information while tackling challenges that other entities, including the state, have failed to address. For many, cutting funding for the CRB program is not just a failure to support the people, but a failure to protect the land. The CRB Response Team needs continued funding. Please take the time to understand the vital work they do and the lasting impact their efforts have on the islands and communities everywhere.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:44:41 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Dilek Sahin | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am submitting this testimony as Dilek Sahin, PhD. I have been working as a conservation scientist in Hawaii and in strong support of the 643 HB RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM. CRB populations can have devastating impacts on palm species in Hawaii that are foundational to cultural heritage, agriculture, ecosystems, and economies. Therefore I believe investing resources for the coconut rhinoceros beetle response program is critical to implement proactive measures on the Hawaiian Islands.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:13:04 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Marie | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I work in the hospitality industry on the island of Oahu. As a person in this industry , I didn't think the coconut rhinoceros beetle invasion would affect us. However , as the years passed , I can clearly see the effects that the CRB has taken around our island and it saddens me. Hundreds of (native) palms have been demolished because of them. Especially on the west and north side of Oahu. Recently , I learned from the CRB Response Team that not only do they feast on palm trees , but they are also opportunistic pests that will survive without coconuts so who knows what kind of plants may be affected next. I've called this island my home for the past 18 years and it breaks my heart seeing these pests take over when there's so much we could do to prevent that.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:19:12 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Cody Morden | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am for the funding and support of the coconut rhinoceros beetle program. It is important to preserve the agriculture that contributes to Hawaii's identity and to reduce the damage the invasive species can spread within the state and potentially further. Our community and future generations deserve the chance to see the beauty Hawaii provides and inspires and the coconut rhinoceros beetle program can help with the conservation and preservation of the islands.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:24:34 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Rian Huizingh | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support this bill and the work that the Crb team does.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:25:03 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I'm writing in support of bill HB643, which provides funding for Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) Respsone. Continued funding is critical to ensuring CRB are held in check/removed from the neighbor islands. CRB is rampant on Oahu, and threatens culturally important species – niu and loulou. Many loulou species are endangered, and CRB is likely to push them to extinction. As a kama'aina, this would be an unbearable loss, as these plants are a critical part of the landscape and vital to cultural practices.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jane Reppun Beachy

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:25:29 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Marlee Monahan | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Dear Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB643, which seeks to fund and establish critical short-term management initiatives for the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) response program.

It is deeply concerning that the state has not yet taken sufficient action to address the ongoing coconut rhinoceros beetle crisis—a failure that risks irreversible damage to Hawaii’s environment, economy, and cultural heritage. For nearly a decade, CRB infestations have spread with alarming consequences, yet the state’s response has been inconsistent and underfunded, allowing this invasive pest to establish and expand its destructive presence.

Hawaii is at a critical tipping point. The CRB threatens coconut palms and other iconic vegetation that define our islands’ natural beauty and cultural identity. Every day that action is delayed, the infestation worsens, and the cost of remediation increases exponentially. The lack of adequate funding and a unified response has already allowed the beetle population to grow unchecked in key areas, and without immediate intervention, containment and control will become impossible.

The CRB response program relies on a team of dedicated professionals, including detection dog handlers, field technicians, researchers, and outreach specialists. These positions are essential to implementing proactive and effective control strategies. Adequate funding will ensure the retention and training of these personnel and support their critical work.

It is unacceptable that one of Hawaii’s most serious invasive species threats has been met with piecemeal funding and temporary measures. The consequences of this inaction include:

1. Environmental Devastation:

Coconut palms are not only emblematic of Hawaii’s identity but also vital to its ecosystems. These trees provide habitat, protect coastal areas from erosion, and support biodiversity. Current efforts to mitigate CRB impacts are insufficient, allowing this pest to jeopardize entire

ecosystems.

2. Economic Losses:

The tourism and agricultural sectors, which are the backbone of Hawaii's economy, are at stake. Coconut palms contribute to the visual appeal that draws millions of visitors annually. Their destruction erodes the image of Hawaii as a lush, tropical paradise and directly harms tourism. Furthermore, agricultural losses caused by CRB damage to palms and other crops will continue to grow without intervention.

3. Cultural Harm:

Coconut palms are a vital resource for traditional Hawaiian practices, providing materials for food, shelter, crafts, and ceremonies. By failing to adequately address the CRB threat, the state risks destroying an integral part of Hawaii's cultural heritage.

The current lack of decisive, sustained funding demonstrates a troubling disregard for the long-term costs of inaction. It is imperative that the state commit the necessary resources to the CRB response program to prevent further spread, support essential personnel, and implement proven containment strategies.

Proactive management of invasive species is not an optional endeavor—it is an obligation. I strongly urge this committee to recognize the urgency of this crisis and take decisive action by passing HB643. Anything less is a failure of responsibility to Hawaii's people, environment, and future generations.

Sincerely,

Marlee Monahan

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:28:56 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I am writing in support of HB643. The coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) poses a severe threat to many culturally significant and food-providing plants in Hawai'i. Addressing this pest now is far more cost-effective than attempting to control its spread after it has expanded its range further.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 10:33:55 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Elizabeth Speith | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Elizabeth Speith, and I am submitting testimony in **strong support of HB643**, which establishes much-needed initiatives to combat the coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB). As a resident of House District 12, I am deeply invested in protecting our island and our communities from this devastating pest.

While Maui Nui remains CRB-free, we are united in safeguarding our island’s palms, which are critical for food sovereignty (e.g., niu / coconut palm), for protecting our ecologically unique loulu palms, and for their significance in community and landscape settings. On Maui, we are working to ensure we can supply our own palm stock and to build capacity to manage high-risk materials like compost and rich garden soils locally. However, we need strong support for islandwide solutions to O‘ahu’s CRB infestation and measures to ensure Maui Nui stays CRB-free.

I have personally participated in CRB workshops on Maui, and I would love to see expanded support for industry front-line workers like landscapers, tree trimmers, and nurseries, who are essential to early detection and prevention. Maui already has many pono businesses that help reduce CRB risks.

For example, in 2023, a tree-trimming business on Maui discovered CRB larvae and promptly contacted MISC and HDOA. Together, they swiftly took down, chipped, and fumigated the trees and surveyed nearly 30,000 nearby palms for signs of CRB damage to trace the source. HDOA, UH, and MISC even prophylactically treated high-risk palms in the area to ensure CRB did not spread. This swift, collaborative response highlights how critical programs like UH’s CRB response team are in supporting our efforts to remain CRB-free.

Additionally, expanded inspections- such as **canine teams** and **subsidies for fumigation**- are vital to preventing interisland spread. Programs like those outlined in HB643 are key to our success in keeping CRB out of Maui Nui.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. Please support HB643 to provide Hawai‘i with the tools and resources to manage CRB infestations and protect our islands.

Elizabeth Speith
House District 12

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 11:37:02 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Yes to funding CRB response!

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 12:09:13 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I am in support of funding for CRB response statewide for our native plants, ornamental habitats and agriculture.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 2:32:24 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Sara Moore | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Please support HB643. We need to stop the spread of this devastating invasive species.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 3:35:21 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Mary Tubbs | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Thank you Representative Martin and Committee Members for this bill to attempt to eradicate and prevent the spread of the CRB. I live in the back farm roads of Waimanalo, where tree-trimmers often dump CRB infected mulch, in the mauka farm areas. One month ago I walked on three streets (upper Kakaina St., Kakaina Pl., Waikupanaha, and Mahailua St.) to count and photograph approximately 30 trees with CRB palm infestations. I reported it to the agency, but before I could finish uploading all the sites and data, they called and said they are no longer even accepting data for Oahu. I said you must! What happens if new bills are introduced? It was frustrating because the problem is so severe here in the Waimanalo farm lands.

My neighbor said that he or his dog find 1 or 2 larva/beetles DAILY, on their farm; this compared to 1 or 2 larva/bugs weekly, six months ago. CRB is affecting us in major ways: I have two royal palms that are infested. These are critical trees, 20 & 80 years old, which help to control erosion on my sloping hillside property. Now I must cut down the 50 ft. one (at a cost of a few thousand I am sure) and replant. I will try to save the 20ft. one at a cost of about \$400/for 4 months or \$1200/yr, for a treatment that includes treatment of the fronds, or \$175 for just a 2-month root injection. It's expensive! In addition there are damage costs when the fronds fall unexpectedly. We've had torn tarps, while my neighbor just had her plexiglass carport broken when her neighbors' infested giant royal palm frond fell 40 ft. onto it.

HB643's provision for training tree trimmers is welcome, but they may disregard it, considering there is no incentive or place for them to dispose of the truckloads of beetle-infested trimmings properly. The list of trained personnel in subsection (2) of the bill would be helpful to me as a homeowner, because I have no idea of the effectiveness of the treatments recommended by the companies I contacted. Moreover, the subsidies for residential "canopy treatments," are most welcomed, as this new CRB expense is difficult to cover on a fixed income. Finally, item (6) funding the biocontrol research is a critical measure to eradicate this CRB pandemic. If left untreated, it is only a matter of time before the palms in Kailua, and those in front of the Royal Palace- one of which came from my street- are decimated. Please pass HB643.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 4:53:34 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Gabrielle Camacho | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am in support of HB643. We need as much funding as possible to go to hiring more staff, research, and equipment to combat the rhino beetle. I'm from an island where in a lot of areas, the coconut trees are decimated by the rhino beetle, and I do not want to see that happen here.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:13:33 PM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Beacuse of the state's inaction to control CRB in the early stages of its detection on Oahu, our coconutre and several native palm species and local food plants are now seriously at risk of major depletion. Without a biocontrol method, CRB will see to it that coconut palms and our native loulu no longer exist in Hawaii.

HB-643

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 6:59:23 AM

Testimony for AGR on 1/29/2025 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Klayton Kubo | Individual | Support | Remotely Via Zoom |

Comments:

Support