

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

FEBRUARY 3, 2025
1:02 PM
CONFERENCE ROOM 224 & VIDEOCONFERENCE

SENATE BILL NO. 1171
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 1171 relating to invasive species. The bill requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a program to provide certain monofilament netting free of charge to the public through local hardware stores to slow the growth and spread of coconut rhinoceros beetles in the State; requires the DOA to establish rules allowing the sale and distribution of certain monofilament netting in the State; and appropriates funds. The Hawaii Department of Agriculture (Department) offers comments.

The use of fine meshed nets to protect plants against pests may be part of a comprehensive pest management plan. The Department suggests changes for clarity to ensure that the appropriate Department-approved mesh netting is used pursuant to rules. The Department believes that only including specific mesh size may limit the ability of the netting to protect appropriate plants. Suggested changes to address this are listed below:



“. . . contrary, fine meshed nets, including monofilament netting of [~~one-half to three-inch~~] an appropriate mesh size, may be used for the protection of”

The Department also believes that similar changes to those listed above are needed to ensure clarity and consistency throughout the rule. Based on the current verbiage, both the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), as amended, and Hawaii Administrative Rules §4-66-34 for non-chemical pesticide devices are triggered. The use pattern of netting which would directly control and kill Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles rather than protect plants as defined in HRS §141-17 would be subject to FIFRA and HRS 149A. The suggested changes to address the concerns are listed below:

“. . . material [~~that is used~~] designed for bird work; and allowing the distribution and sale of fine meshed nets, including monofilament netting of [~~one-half to three-inch~~] an appropriate mesh size to [~~prevent the spread of coconut rhinoceros beetles~~] protect plants from invasive species.”

The Department believes that Section 2 of this measure needs to be amended to ensure compliance with Federal and State pesticides laws and rules and be amended for consistency regarding the mesh size. As the Department has offices across the State, the Department believes that appropriate departmental employees should be responsible for net distribution to ensure that those individuals who are receiving the nets are in need and are actually able to appropriately apply it. The Department is unsure of a list of hardware stores and would need to filter and analyze any list developed for this program. While the Department agrees that using “local hardware stores” would expand distribution of netting, distribution should be prioritized to those individuals most in need, which could not be readily managed via the local hardware stores. While the Department appreciates providing draft language for the informational pamphlets, the Department believes Section 2(b) should be removed to ensure that any

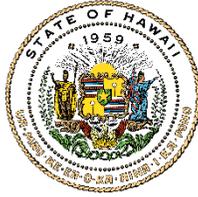
statement on an informational pamphlet is able to be adjusted should new netting materials, mesh size, or application procedures be refined or are discovered.

Should the Legislature be amenable to amending this measure to allow the Department to distribute the netting, the Department believes that Section 2(c) can also be removed as the Department can create internal policies and procedures to manage a departmental netting distribution program as opposed to going through the formal rulemaking process pursuant to Chapter 91, HRS. This would significantly decrease the time and resources necessary to implement the rules and once established, subsequently providing education and outreach to each of the local hardware stores, provided they would like to participate in the program. Additionally, eliminating the requirement for rulemaking would also enable the Department to distribute the netting to affected individuals quicker.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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

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Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Monday, February 3, 2025
1:02 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 224 & Via Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 1171
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Senate Bill 1171 requires the Department of Agriculture to establish a program to provide certain monofilament netting free of charge to the public, establishes rules allowing the sale and distribution of certain monofilament netting in the State, and appropriates funds to slow the growth and spread of coconut rhinoceros beetle. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) provides comments on this measure.**

The coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) is considered a major agricultural and environmental pest that is particularly damaging to coconut palms (*Cocos nucifera*). It can also attack native loulu palms, hala, banana, pineapple, and sugarcane. Adults damage living palms, either killing the tree due to direct damage or opening up the tree to fatal damage from other insects or pathogens. The damage can be extreme on the Pacific Islands, where this beetle has no natural enemies. In Palau, where the beetle first invaded in 1942, the coconut palm was eradicated on some islands, with overall mortality across the archipelago reaching 50 percent. CRB was detected on O'ahu in 2013 and remained contained to that island until last year, with the first non-O'ahu detection on Kaua'i and subsequently Hawai'i Island and Maui.

Unlike little fire ants, treatment options are still relatively limited for managing CRB infestations. There are pesticide applications that can be used effectively, but these can be complex and require special licensing, making them impractical for the general public. Netting is a management and detection tool for CRB that can exclude other medium to large pests and be used on individual plants that property owners want to protect. The CRB Response Team primarily applies this tool to breeding material on the ground or to the crown of palms near the base of fronds. Although this approach will not by itself manage CRB infestations, it is one of the few tools that can be applied on trees when

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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

pesticides cannot be used. Research is needed for additional tools to manage this damaging species through an integrated pest management approach. Subsidizing netting for people to protect their coconut trees should not divert funds from this critical research.

The Department provides a few additional considerations:

- Nets used to manage CRB damage should be more visible to prevent the entanglement of non-target wildlife, such as birds. This can include color, defining large filament diameter, dark color, and/or the inclusion of visual cues like ribbons or balls, as well as not using any mist net material used to capture birds.
- Include general language like "applied in a manner unlikely to" entangle birds, become dislodged and enter the water, or entangle or disturb native and beneficial animals.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

JOSH GREEN
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

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HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

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DEXTER KISHIDA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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

Senate Committee on AGRICULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

**Monday, February 3, 2025
1:02 PM**

State Capitol, Conference Room 224 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of HOUSE BILL 1171 RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Senate Bill 1171 Requires the Department of Agriculture (HDOA) to establish a program with appropriations to provide certain monofilament netting free of charge to the public through local hardware stores to slow the growth and spread of coconut rhinoceros beetles in the State, and to establish rules allowing the sale and distribution of certain monofilament netting in the State. **The Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (Council) supports this measure.**

Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) continues to be a major threat to palm and other species of trees throughout Hawai'i. CRB is widespread on O'ahu and the Council recently advised that CRB is now widespread on Kaua'i. This pest is a constant threat to Maui, Hawai'i, and all Hawaiian Islands and the Pacific Region. CRB weakens and kills trees by burrowing into the trunk in search of a food source. Making matters worse, prevention is very difficult as addressing green waste is very labor intensive and the distinctive "V shape" stunted pattern of palm-frond-growth only becomes evident months after a tree has become infested and damaged.

Coconut Beetle Response, managed through the University of Hawai'i (UH), recommends various forms of prevention to protect trees from CRB which include the use of netting. Netting can be used to entangle and exclude CRB from accessing the crown of trees, providing a chemical-free treatment option or additional protection when used with pesticides.

The Council advises that CRB prefer to feed on coconut, royal, date, and fan palms (including Pitchardia), but if these trees are unavailable CRB will feed on Hala, Taro, Banana, Pineapple, and Sugarcane. HDOA, the Department of Land & Natural Resources, and UH entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to address CRB, and this bill would aid in the public's ability to protect their trees from CRB damage.

This tool would not result in reducing the spread of CRB, but rather protection of individual trees. More tools are needed to prevent CRB and manage this pest where it has become widespread.

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



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February 3, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON SB 1171
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:02 PM

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

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports SB 1171, which requires the Department of Agriculture (DOA) to establish a program to provide certain monofilament netting free of charge to the public through local hardware stores to help slow the growth and spread of coconut rhinoceros beetles (CRB) in the State. Additionally, this bill requires DOA to establish rules for the sale and distribution of specific monofilament netting and appropriates funds to support these efforts.

Invasive species are among the most devastating threats to Hawaii's environment, economy, and agricultural industry. Agriculture suffers when invasive species are introduced. Every year, numerous new pests are introduced into the State, such as the coqui frog, coffee berry borer, macadamia felted coccid, little fire ant, coconut rhinoceros beetle, small hive beetle, and varroa mite, to name a few. Once established, these invasive species are difficult and costly to control, making early intervention critical to preventing long-term damage. Control measures take time to develop, leaving farmers and ranchers at risk.

CRB has already devastated coconut and palm tree populations on Oahu and continues to spread to the neighboring islands, causing widespread environmental, agricultural, and economic harm. Without urgent action, the beetle could severely impact agriculture, landscaping, tourism, and native plant ecosystems throughout Hawaii.

Fine-meshed monofilament netting has proven to be an effective trapping tool for controlling coconut rhinoceros beetle populations. Making netting freely available through

local hardware stores increases access for farmers, ranchers, landscapers, and residents who need effective tools to protect their trees and crops.

While we fully support the distribution of monofilament netting to combat CRB, safeguards must be in place to prevent misuse of the nets.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.



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Kaua'i

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

The Hawaii Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU supports SB1171.**

SB1171 addresses a significant challenge faced by Hawaii's agricultural community: the invasive coconut rhinoceros beetle, which poses a serious threat to coconut trees and other valuable crops. By mandating the Department of Agriculture to establish a program for distributing monofilament netting free of charge through local hardware stores, this bill offers a practical and accessible solution to slow the beetle's proliferation. Facilitating public access to this netting empowers farmers and gardeners to protect their crops proactively, ultimately supporting the sustainability of Hawaii's agriculture and preserving the natural resources that are integral to local communities.

Moreover, the bill's directive for the Department of Agriculture to establish rules for the sale and distribution of monofilament netting ensures a managed and organized approach to combating this invasive species. By appropriating funds specifically for this initiative, the bill underscores a committed investment in safeguarding Hawaii's biodiversity and agricultural economy. This proactive measure not only provides immediate benefits by curbing the spread of the coconut rhinoceros beetle but also sets a precedent for future efforts to address invasive species, reflecting a long-term commitment to the health and resilience of Hawaii's ecosystems.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawaii Farmers Union



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
February 3, 2025 at 1:02 p.m.

By

Parwinder Grewal, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience

And

Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 1171 – RELATED TO INVASIVE SPECIES

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the intent of SB 1171 relating to invasive species which requires the Department of Agriculture (DOA) to establish a program to provide certain monofilament netting free of charge to the public through local hardware stores to slow the growth and spread of coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB) within the State with appropriations.

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. Treatments available for residents and palm owners are limited and often involve the use of pesticides. A physical barrier such as monofilament netting has some efficacy in entangling CRB attempting to feed in palm canopies and represents a non-chemical method that offers some protection against CRB.

University of Hawai'i Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience (UHM-CTAHR) supports this bill as it provides a non-chemical option for CRB management. This support, however, is based on the Hawai'i DOA's Pesticide Branch approval of this approach as a [pest control device](#), ensuring that its use is not in violation of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act or similar federal pest control laws. UHM-CTAHR would also recommend a provision stating that any mesh netting with an opening size that is illegal for fishing in Hawai'i be distributed in pre-cut lengths (such as 5 to 10 feet) that would make this netting impractical for illegal use in Hawai'i's waters.

We support the intent of SB 1171 with suggested amendments. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

SB-1171

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 8:23:59 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keoni Shizuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha committee members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

I am testifying in support of this bill.

Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle is an invasive pest that has the potential to do devastating amount of damage to our environment. We really need to utilize all the weapons we can to control them. This is a simple, yet effective tool that can make a big impact.

Please consider supporting this bill.

Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-1171

Submitted on: 2/1/2025 9:58:15 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/3/2025 1:02:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support this measure.