

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
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**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON WAYS AND MEANS AND JUDICIARY

**WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2025
10:05 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 211 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 252, SD1
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

Chairs Dela Cruz and Rhoads, Vice Chairs Moriwaki and Gabbard, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill No. 252, SD1 relating to invasive species. The bill seeks to clarify that the importation of any item or material infested or infected with an insect or other animal, disease, or other pest is prohibited; authorize the Department of Agriculture to inspect any item imported or moved into the State from another part of the continental United States or between the Hawaiian Islands; prohibit the sale of merchandise that a seller knows is infested or infected with a pest; authorize the Department of Agriculture to compel the quarantine, treatment, or destruction of certain materials; and clarify penalties for violations. The Department supports the intent of this bill and offers comments.

The Department agrees with the intent of the changes to HRS 150A-5(5), to enable the inspection of commodities that are not currently subject to the list of commodities that require inspection and offers comments about implementation. The Department has some concerns that because every item imported into the state or moved inter-island, and also including persons, could now be subject to ad-hoc



administrative inspections, there would be a reasonable expectation of HDOA to conduct said administrative inspections in a fair manner. In order to do so, significant financial investments, such as those listed below, are required:

- Significant increases in manpower including inspectors, administrative support and supervisory staff, with necessary personnel increases likely being orders of magnitude above current staffing levels, to effectively implement these inspections;
- Consistent funding to obtain the commensurate physical resources (office space, vehicles, equipment, supplies, etc.) needed to conduct the inspections;
- Requires the development of departmental policies to create thresholds on when/where/how these inspections would occur to ensure that they are not being done arbitrarily, with subsequent re-training of all staff statewide; and
- Significant outreach to all importers statewide, interisland shippers, and interisland passengers, the vast majority of which are not currently subject to inspections by HDOA.

The Department is appreciative of the clarifications to HRS 150A-14, but notes that as currently drafted, if during the course of an administrative inspection, should a criminal violation under the “knowingly” standard be discovered, the Department would be unable to enforce these provisions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

LATE



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT TO SENATE BILL 252 SD1
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPEICES**

Senate Committees on Judiciary and Ways and Means
Hawai'i State Capitol

February 26, 2025

10:05 am

Room 211

Aloha e Chairs Rhoad and Dela Cruz, Vice Chairs Gabbard and Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committees on Judiciary and Ways and Means:

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) provides testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB252 SD1 which seeks to strengthen efforts by the Department of Agriculture to prevent the introduction of invasive plants, animals, and insects into Hawai'i. This measure is a critical step toward protecting our 'āina, our people, and our cultural heritage.

The introduction of invasive species threatens the very foundation of our islands' fragile ecosystems. Whether through soil erosion, destruction of native habitats, or competition with endemic species, the impacts of invasive species are profound and often irreversible. Native, endemic, and Polynesian introduced species not only contribute to the biodiversity of our environment but are integral to our cultural practices, traditions, and ways of life. Invasive species disrupt not only the physical environment and imperiled ecosystems but also threaten the cultural, spiritual, and economic fabric of our islands.

OHA believes that it is vital that the Department of Agriculture has the authority, resources and cooperative support necessary to inspect and regulate all forms of transportation to Hawai'i. By ensuring that all cargo, vehicles, and shipments into Hawai'i are thoroughly inspected for potential invasive species, we can protect our land, water, and native species from further harm. We support measures that enforce stringent biosecurity practices to ensure that our island ecosystems are not further burdened by the preventable introduction of invasive species.

In conclusion, by supporting this bill, we are affirming our commitment along with other agencies to commit to being responsible stewards of our 'āina, ensuring that future generations can continue to thrive in a Hawai'i that remains culturally and ecologically intact.

We urge the committee to **pass** this important bill SB252 SD1 in order to safeguard the unique ecosystems and cultural integrity of Hawai'i Nei. Mahalo a for your time and consideration.



Hawai'i Forest Industry Association

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Email: hfia@hawaiiiforest.org

Date: 02/24/25

TO: JDC Chair Rhoads, WAM Chair Dela Cruz and JDC, WAM Committee Members

FROM: Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA)

SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of SB252 SD1 Relating to Invasive Species

Dear Chair Rhoads, Chair Dela Cruz and JDC and WAM Committee Members,

On behalf of the Directors of the Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA), this testimony is in support of SB252 SD1 Relating to Invasive Species.

The Hawai'i Forest Industry Association (HFIA) supports expanding the Department of Agriculture's authority to conduct investigations, inspections and clarify penalties to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species in the state.

Considering that Hawaii is known as the "endangered species capital of the world" due to the damaging effects of invasive species on our unique biodiversity, implementing stronger inspection practices of incoming nursery stock, trees, grafts, cuttings, seeds, roots etc. is logical. As the bill states, federal law allows the United States Department of Agriculture to inspect persons, baggage, cargo and other articles departing from Hawaii to U.S. mainland in order to protect against the spread of pests from Hawaii. Considering Hawaii's unique susceptibility to invasive species, we should be implementing equally vigilant inspections and practices for incoming persons, baggage, cargo and articles.

Monitoring for and protecting against invasive pests helps to protect our agricultural land, our forested land, our ranch and pasture lands, and the economies tied to all three. Protecting our islands and resources against further outbreaks of invasive species is a responsibility we have to the future generations who will rely on those resources. For these reasons HFIA hopes that you will support SB252 SD1.

Mahalo,

Guy Cellier, President
Hawai'i Forest Industry Association

HFIA's mission is to promote healthy and productive forests and a sustainable forest industry through management, education, planning, information exchange, and advocacy. HFIA has over 100 members including woodworkers, landowners, sawyers, foundations, foresters, growers, educators, environmentalists, architects, millers, ranchers, and others interested in HFIA's mission and goals.

HFIA Board of Directors

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



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February 26, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICARY
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

TESTIMONY ON SB 252, SD1
RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
10:05 AM

Aloha Chairs Rhoads and Dela Cruz, Vice-Chairs Gabbard and Moriwaki, and Members of the Committees:

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

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports SB 252, SD1, which strengthens Hawai'i's biosecurity measures by clarifying that the importation of any item or material infested or infected with a pest is prohibited, authorizing the Department of Agriculture (DOA) to inspect any item imported into the State or moved between islands, prohibiting the sale of merchandise known to be infested with pests, and authorizing DOA to compel the quarantine, treatment, or destruction of certain materials. The bill also clarifies the penalties for violations.

Hawai'i's agricultural industry and natural environment face constant threats from invasive species. Pests such as the coffee berry borer, coconut rhinoceros beetle, little fire ant, and two-lined spittlebug have caused severe economic damage to local farms, increased production costs, and disrupted ecosystems. Invasive species control measures are essential for protecting Hawai'i's food security, economy, and native biodiversity.

SB 252, SD1, provides the following improvements to Hawai'i's biosecurity efforts:

- Grants DOA the authority to inspect items imported into the State or moved between islands for pests, enabling the department to address potential threats before they become widespread.

- Prohibits the sale of merchandise that a seller knows to be infested or infected with pests, preventing the spread of harmful species through commercial activities.
- Allows DOA to compel the quarantine, treatment, or destruction of infested or infected materials, ensuring that threats are swiftly and effectively managed.
- Clarifies penalties for violations to ensure that there are strong deterrents against the introduction and spread of pests.

Prevention and early detection are the most cost-effective ways to manage invasive species. Every dollar invested in biosecurity saves significantly more in long-term control and eradication costs. Protecting Hawai'i's agriculture, environment, and public health requires strong biosecurity measures that prevent the introduction and spread of invasive pests.

We urge the committee to pass SB 252, SD1, to support the state's ongoing efforts to safeguard Hawai'i's agricultural industry and natural environment from invasive species.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



MAUI
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
VOICE OF BUSINESS

LATE

**HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON WAYS AND MEANS and JUDICIARY
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 211
Wednesday, February 26, 2025 AT 10:05 A.M.**

To The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Members of the committee on Ways and Means
To The Honorable Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the committee on Judiciary

SUPPORT SB252 SD1 RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **SUPPORTS SB252 SD1** which clarifies that the importation of any item or material infested or infected with an insect or other animal, disease, or other pest is prohibited; authorizes the Department of Agriculture to inspect any item imported or moved into the State from another part of the continental United States or between the Hawaiian Islands; prohibits the sale of merchandise that a seller knows is infested or infected with a pest; and authorizes the Department of Agriculture to compel the quarantine, treatment, or destruction of certain materials.

The Maui Chamber of Commerce recognizes that one of the significant challenges facing our island state is the transfer of invasive species through inter-island plant sales. Moreover, the importation of plants that evade agricultural inspections further amplifies the risk of these invasive species establishing themselves in new areas, where existing mitigation measures may prove ineffective. These species can profoundly impact our environment, economy, and social well-being. Therefore, we support this bill that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the Department of Agriculture in their important inspection process.

For these reasons, we **SUPPORT SB252 SD1**.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.

SB-252-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 5:51:08 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2025 10:05:00 AM

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

Comments:

I strongly support SB252 SD1 that prohibits the import or sale/donation of pest-infested items, and clarifies the Agriculture Department's authority and responsibility to enforce these prohibitions through administrative inspections and quarantine orders, among other provisions. This bill is essential as it will remove the Agriculture Department's ability to use the lack of inspection or quarantine authorities as an excuse for inaction, as has been the case with the little fire ant, coconut rhinoceros beetle, and too many other known pests. Enough is enough. We need to protect our precious islands from more harm from invasive species, SB252 SD1 will help to do that.

Please pass SB252 SD1. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony

SB-252-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 8:49:14 AM

Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2025 10:05:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

PAINFUL BUT NECESSARY.

WOULD BE GOOD TO OFFER SOME KIND OF INCENTIVE TO SELF-REPORT.

MAHALO!

LATE

SB-252-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 12:15:19 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/26/2025 10:05:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Committee Chair and Committee members

My name is Marcia Kemble and I strongly support SB252. Invasive species like the little fire ant and coconut rhinoceros beetle are already causing serious harm to Hawai'i's environment, agriculture, and communities, and we must make major transformative shifts in our biosecurity strategy to mitigate the impacts of these and other invasive pests on our islands and future generations.

Two of my siblings have already had infestations of little fire ants on their property – one in Kailua and one in Makiki Heights, and they have also been found on other properties not far at all from my house, so I am very alarmed about this.

This bill will make clear that the import and intrastate sale or gift of invasive species-infested items is prohibited - without requiring the Department of Agriculture to pass rules or issue orders, processes that could take months, years, or decades. It will also remove the Department's ability to use the lack of inspection or quarantine authorities as an excuse for inaction, as has been the case with the little fire ant, coconut rhinoceros beetle, and too many other known pests.

SB252 is essential to safeguarding our environment, food security, and way of life. Therefore, I urge you to PASS SB252.

Sincerely,
Marcia Kemble