

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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Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**JANUARY 31, 2025
1:50 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 224 AND VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**SENATE BILL NO. 686
RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill No. 686 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.

SB-686

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 8:06:02 AM

Testimony for HRE on 1/31/2025 1:50:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kamran Fujimoto	Testifying for Hawaii Department of Agriculture	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Testimony was submitted as "in-person" but I will be available remotely instead.

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committees on
HIGHER EDUCATION
and
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
Friday, January 31, 2025
1:50 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 224 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 686
RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE

Senate Bill 686 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.



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 Higher Education and
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
January 31, 2025 at 1:50 PM

By
Parwinder Grewal, Dean
College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience
And
Michael Bruno, Provost
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

SB 686 – RELATED TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM

Chair Kim, Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committees:

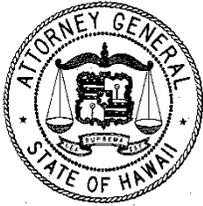
Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the intent of SB 686 relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) Program which establishes short-term management initiatives for a CRB response with appropriations for activities and positions.

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'ihau, 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 SB 686 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.



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2025**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. NO. 686, RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEES ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

DATE: Friday, January 31, 2025

TIME: 1:50 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 224

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Candace J. Park, Deputy Attorney General

Chairs Kim and Gabbard and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

This bill requires the University of Hawai'i to incorporate six short-term management initiatives for the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Response Program and appropriates funds for this purpose. Two of the management initiatives require the University of Hawaii to award grants of public money: (1) to subsidize canopy treatments for residential palm owners; and (2) to subsidize container fumigation of high-risk materials traveling between islands.

Article X, section 6, of the Hawai'i Constitution gives the Board of Regents of the University of Hawai'i "exclusive jurisdiction over the internal structure, management, and operation of the university." Section 6 further provides: "This section shall not limit the power of the legislature to enact laws of statewide concern. The legislature shall have the exclusive jurisdiction to identify laws of statewide concern." We recommend an amendment that adds a statement identifying this bill as a law of statewide concern.

Article VII, section 4, of the Hawai'i Constitution requires that "no grant of public money or property shall be made except pursuant to standards provided by law." Therefore, we recommend that this bill be amended to insert appropriate standards. Examples of existing statutes that provide standards for agencies to issue grants are

part II of chapter 9 and sections 10-17, 210D-11, and 383-128, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

We have attached draft standards to this testimony as a sample to work from. These standards could be inserted on page 4, line 13, as a new section 3, with subsequent sections appropriately renumbered. Additionally, we are happy to work with you on developing more specific standards.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

POSSIBLE STANDARDS FOR THE GRANTS IN THIS BILL

SECTION 3. Applications for grants subsidizing canopy treatment for residential palm owners and container fumigation of high-risk materials traveling between islands shall be made to the university of Hawaii and contain the information as shall be required by rules adopted thereunder. At a minimum, the applicant shall:

- (1) Be licensed or accredited, in accordance with federal, state, or county statutes, rules, or ordinances, to conduct the activities or provide the services for which a grant is awarded;
- (2) Provide a detailed plan outlining the scope, objectives, and projected impact of the project or projects and a clear breakdown of how grant funds will be utilized;
- (3) Agree to use state funds exclusively for the purposes of these programs;
- (4) Indicate capability to properly use the grant for the purpose of these grant programs. [Specific applicant qualifications should be described for the different types of grants.];
- (5) Comply with all applicable federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, creed, sex, age, sexual orientation, disability, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law;
- (6) Agree not to use state funds for purposes of entertainment or perquisites;
- (7) Comply with other requirements as the university of Hawaii may prescribe;
- (8) Comply with all applicable federal, state, and county statutes, rules, and ordinances;
- (9) Agree to indemnify and save harmless the State of Hawaii and its officers, agents, and employees from and against any and all claims arising out of or

resulting from activities carried out or projects undertaken with funds provided hereunder and procure sufficient insurance to provide this indemnification if requested to do so by the university of Hawaii; and

- (10) Agree to make available to the university of Hawaii all records the applicant may have relating to the grant, to allow state agencies to monitor the applicant's compliance with this section.

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

January 28, 2025

TESTIMONY OF FERN HOLLAND
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON
SB 686, RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Friday, January 31, 2025
1:50 p.m.
Conference Room 224
Via Videoconference

Dear Chair Kim, Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of SB 686, Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kaua'i County Council.

Kaua'i is currently facing a severe and rapidly escalating infestation of Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles (CRBs). 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 SB 686, 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.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 686. 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,

FERN HOLLAND
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

AAO:mdt

COUNTY COUNCIL

Mel Rapozo, Chair
KipuKai Kualii, Vice Chair
Addison Bulosan
Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Felicia Cowden
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OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

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January 29, 2025

**TESTIMONY OF FELICIA COWDEN
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON
SB 686, RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Friday, January 31, 2025
1:50 p.m.
Conference Room 225
Via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Kim, Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of SB 686, 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 SB 686. 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:mn

SB-686

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 1:11:52 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/31/2025 1:50:00 PM

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

Comments:

Testimony in support of SB686

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



January 30, 2025

Hearing: Senate Committee on Higher Education and Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

RE: SB686

Aloha Chair Kim, Vice Chair Kidani, Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education and Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SB686, 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 SB686 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 SB686 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 SB686. 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

JOSH GREEN
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

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PARWINDER GREWAL, Ph.D.
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

MARY ALICE EVANS
BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT &
TOURISM

DEXTER KISHIDA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

**House Committee on
HIGHER EDUCATION
&
AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT**

**Friday, January 31, 2025
1:50 PM**

State Capitol, Conference Room 224 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
SENATE BILL 686
RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE**



Senate Bill 686 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.



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January 31, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

TESTIMONY ON SB 686
RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
1:50 PM

Aloha Chairs Kim and Gabbard, Vice-Chairs Kidani and Richards, 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 686, 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.



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

January 29, 2025

Testimony in Support of SB686: Relating to the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Program

Aloha Chairs Kim and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kidani and Richards, and Members of the Committees on Higher Education and Agricultural and Environment,

We, Melodie Aduja and Alan Burdick, are testifying on behalf of the Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii in strong support of SB686, which seeks to establish short-term management initiatives and appropriate funds to support the coconut rhinoceros beetle response program's activities and positions.

Key Points of Support:

1. **Protecting Hawaii's Palm Species:** The coconut rhinoceros beetle is devastating Hawaii's palm species, which are important to the State's cultural heritage, ecosystems, agricultural economy, and landscape. SB686 recognizes the urgent need to address this invasive species to preserve our natural resources.
2. **Coordinated Partnership:** SB686 acknowledges the coordinated partnership among the University of Hawaii, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Hawaii Department of Agriculture (DOA) in investigating new control methods, disseminating information, and supporting community efforts. This collaboration is essential for effective management and eradication of beetles.
3. **Prevention and Eradication:** Recently developed prevention and eradication expertise and methodology can now be deployed to prevent infestations on islands and communities not yet infested. SB686 supports these efforts by providing the necessary resources and funding.
4. **Short-Term Management Initiatives:** The bill outlines several short-term management initiatives, including:
 - a. Working with tree trimmers, arborists, and the landscaping industry to educate them on current best management practices and combat misinformation on beetle treatment options.
 - b. Subsidizing canopy treatments for residential palm owners.
 - c. Extending coconut rhinoceros beetle response program services to Hawaii Island, Maui, Molokai, and Lanai when beetles are detected.

- d. Using canine inspections on high-risk cargo moving between islands in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture.
 - e. Subsidizing container fumigation of high-risk materials traveling between islands.
 - f. Continuing research with an emphasis on biocontrol.
5. **Community Support:** The bill emphasizes the importance of community involvement and support in combating the coconut rhinoceros beetle. By providing resources and education, SB686 empowers residents to take an active role in protecting Hawaii's palm species.

In conclusion, the Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii strongly supports SB686 and urges the committee to pass this important legislation. By establishing short-term management initiatives and providing necessary funding, we can effectively combat the coconut rhinoceros beetle and protect Hawaii's valuable palm species.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this critical bill.

Sincerely,

Melodie Aduja and Alan Burdick

Co-chairs, Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii



Mike Biechler
Chair
North Shore Law Offices

Carol Philips
Vice-Chair
North Shore Surf Girls

Marcia Murphy
Treasurer
Pacific One Mortgage

Bill Ward
Recording Secretary
Corcoran Properties

Lamont Brown
Director
Maya's Tapas and Wine

Nicolas Vargas Calvo
Director
World Class Notary

T.J. Cuaresma
Director
Tita Ei Nei Productions

Dave Fuga
Director
KT Protection Systems

Erica Lehmkuhl
Director
Seaside Realty

Bill Martin
Director
Island X Hawai'i

Thomas Naylor
Director
Ke Nui Kitchen

Mary Wood
Director
Resident

Michael Sweetman
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Teresa Berthiaume
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Coordinator

66-434 Kamehameha Hwy
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info@gonorthshore.org / www.gonorthshore.org

Testimony in Strong Support of SB686

Relating to coconut rhinoceros beetle devastating Hawaii's palm species

Senate Committees Higher Education & Agriculture and Environment

33rd, Hawai'i State Legislature - State Capitol

1:30 PM, Friday, January 31, 2025 RM 224,

Aloha Chairs Kim & Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kidani & Richards, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Carol Philips, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the **North Shore Chamber of Commerce** in **strong support** of SB686, which seeks to protect and preserve Hawai'i's iconic coconut trees—especially along the North Shore. For untold generations, majestic coconut palms have been a defining feature of our coastline, standing as symbols of our island identity, cultural heritage, and natural beauty. Today, however, we are witnessing the heartbreaking and tragic loss of dozens upon dozens of these treasured trees.

These coconut trees have long served as silent witnesses to our history. Generations of families have gathered in their shade, keiki have played among their roots, and cultural practitioners have utilized coconuts in traditional crafts and ceremonies. Their graceful silhouettes lining the shore have long been featured in artwork, photography, and cherished memories of visitors and local residents alike. With so many of these palms now gone, we lose not only tangible pieces of our natural environment but also vital links to our ancestors and an important part of Hawai'i's cultural story.

Coconut trees protect our shoreline from erosion and provide crucial habitat for local wildlife; their striking presence also fosters an immediate sense of place that is unique to our islands. Allowing these trees to vanish threatens the health of our coastal ecosystem and undermines the rich cultural identity that draws millions of people here every year. By passing SB686, we have the opportunity to safeguard this essential part of Hawai'i's charm and resilience for both current and future generations.

The North Shore Chamber of Commerce urges you to pass SB686 and to continue championing legislation that preserves and restores these symbolic trees along the North Shore—and throughout Hawai'i. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Philips
VP, North Shore Chamber of Commerce

*The North Shore Chamber of Commerce is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization,
Federal Tax ID# 99-0265444*



The Senate
Committee on Higher Education
Committee on Agriculture and Environment
Friday, January 31, 2025
1:50 PM Conference Room 224 & Videoconference
State Capitol

Testimony in Support of SB 686

Aloha Chair Kim, Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Richards, and Members of the Committees,

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) is **in strong support of SB 686, *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 O'ahu 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.

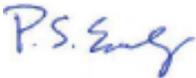
We echo the comments submitted by Kaua'i County officials to HB 643 (the House companion bill) to add the island of Kaua'i on page 4, line 5, to the list of islands where CRB Response is providing services. CRB is rapidly spreading on Kaua'i and they urgently need assistance in attempting to suppress populations.

For all these reasons we strongly support SB 686. 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



January 30, 2025

To: Chairs Mercado and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kidani and Richards, and the Senate Committees on Higher Education and Agriculture and Environment

Subject: **SB686**, Relating to the coconut rhinoceros beetle program

Aloha,

I strongly support **SB686** which establishes short-term management and funding for the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) response program. CRB poses a serious threat to coconut trees, palms, and other essential crops. Without effective management, this invasive pest could spread and significantly harm local agriculture and food security. This bill would protect Hawaii's food systems in a number of ways:

1. Protecting agricultural resources: coconut trees are both culturally significant and are an important resource. CRB destroys these trees by burrowing into their crowns, which weakens and/or kills them over time. If unchecked, CRB could also spread to other crops, damaging farming that relies on healthy plant populations
2. Prevention of losses: CRB spread could lead to economic loss for farmers and other industries that rely on coconut and palm trees. By funding response efforts, this bill prevents costly consequences of uncontrolled infestation. This ensures that both farmers and businesses do not suffer from declining crop yields and increased expenses for pest management.
3. Protecting local food security: Hawaii already heavily relies on imported foods. Any other disruptions to local agriculture could make the state even more dependent on external sources. CRB infestations weaken our ability to grow our own food, making control measures important for protecting our food supply. Investing in CRB management now will only help keep our agricultural lands productive and resilient.

SB686 is a necessary step in controlling CRB before it causes irreversible damage to our agriculture. By funding response and resources to combat this pest, this bill ensures a stronger and more sustainable food system. I respectfully urge the committee to pass this bill to protect our farms, food security, and economy. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Jeanette Burdick & the Food+ Policy Team

#fixourfoodsystem

The Food+ Policy internship develops student advocates who learn work skills while increasing civic engagement to become emerging leaders. We focus on good food systems policy because we see the importance and potential of the food system in combating climate change and increasing the health, equity, and resiliency of Hawai'i communities.

In 2025, the cohort of interns are undergraduate and graduate students and young professionals working in the food system. They are a mix of traditional and nontraditional students, including parents and veterans, who have backgrounds in education, farming, public health, nutrition, and Hawaiian culture.



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Aloha Chairs Kim & Gabbard, Vice Chairs Kidani & Richards, and CMembers of the Committees,

The Hawai'i Farmers Union is a 501(c)(5) agricultural advocacy nonprofit representing a network of over 2,500 family farmers and their supporters across the Hawaiian Islands. **HFUU supports SB686.**

SB686 addresses the urgent need for effective management and control of the coconut rhinoceros beetle, a significant pest threatening Hawaii's agricultural economy and natural ecosystems. The beetle poses a severe risk to coconut palms and other valuable crops, undermining the livelihoods of our local farmers and disrupting the balance of our island's biodiversity. By establishing targeted management initiatives and allocating funding for response activities and necessary positions, this bill provides a comprehensive strategy to mitigate the beetle's devastating impact.

Hawaii's agricultural community cannot afford to overlook the potential destruction caused by unchecked infestations. The dedicated resources outlined in SB686 will support rapid response efforts, including monitoring, eradication, and education initiatives, which are crucial in preventing widespread damage. Investing in this program not only safeguards our crops but also strengthens the resilience of the farming communities that form the backbone of Hawaii's local food systems. It is imperative that we act swiftly and decisively to protect our agricultural and natural resources from this invasive threat.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union

SB-686

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 7:17:47 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/31/2025 1:50:00 PM

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

SB-686

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 2:55:10 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/31/2025 1:50:00 PM

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

Comments:

OMG, this crucial bill needs to be passed YESTERDAY!

SB-686

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 3:04:39 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/31/2025 1:50:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

There is never a good time like the present, as 'they' say.

That said, as you contemplate the merits of this bill and whether or not you want to pass it, there are, at present, CRB infestations on Oahu that are growing exponentially.

Wish I could say, "No pressure here!"

Please pass this bill. Mahalo.

SB-686

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 4:30:57 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/31/2025 1:50:00 PM

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

Comments:

It is imperative that the CRB initiative receives funding to protect the islands. As stated in a previous testimony, the CRB population is well established on Oahu and will only continue to spread and infect other islands. To not end up like Guam, we need to appropriate funds to support our workers and their initiatives to protect the land.

SB-686

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 5:44:02 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/31/2025 1:50:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am I support of this bill to fund the CRB program. It has helped my coconut trees safe from this invasive species. Please continue to fund and support this very important program.

SB-686

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 6:10:26 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/31/2025 1:50:00 PM

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

Comments:

PLEASE MAKE THIS HAPPEN. WE NEED TO STOP THIS CRB INFESTATION
EVERYONE MUST HELP TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM. PLEASE DONT WAIT TILL ITS
TOO LATE

SB-686

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 7:25:44 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/31/2025 1:50:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Committee members of the Senate Committee on Higher Education and the Committee on Agriculture and Environment,

I am testifying in support of this bill.

CRB has had detrimental effects on our palms thus far, and unless we really ramp up our response to them, the situation will continue to get worse. We have learned a lot over the few years, but much more support needs to be given in order for the common public to become well educated and able to do their part and having good practices to ensure that we are able to control this invasive species.

The scariest part is that it isn't just our coconut trees that we are afraid for, but many other species, including banana and hala, as they have been known to attack those plants as well.

Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-686

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 10:37:49 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/31/2025 1:50:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am in support and for the funding of the coconut rhinoceros beetle program. I believe the coconut rhinoceros beetle program works towards the conservation and preservation of Hawaii's agriculture that contributes to Hawaii's identity. I hope to see a future where the next generations experience the beauty of Hawaii as we did and the coconut rhinoceros beetle program contributes in keeping that future alive.

SB-686

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 1:20:00 AM

Testimony for HRE on 1/31/2025 1:50:00 PM

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

Comments:

I was part of Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Response Team, driving across the whole island of Oahu from 2021 to 2024. From my time in CRB Response Team, I have seen significant shift of CRB population that has reached North Shore and Windward area. Even before the coconut trees were being cut down at Haleiwa at 2024, CRB Response Team has communicated with the publics about CRB detections in North Shore and Windward area, but no actions were taken by the state of Hawai'i

I eventually decided to resign myself from the CRB Response Team at 2024, due to the fact that it was mentally straining for me to see dying coconut trees across Oahu, and having to converse with numerous frustrated land owners on field sites everyday. It brought sadness and sorrow for me to see many people who have heavily relied on coconut trees to be forced to cut their trees in their homesteads and farms.

Many landowners relied on little support CRB Response Team could provide for them, but CRB Response Team's activity is limited by funding, and its specified perimeters set by funding entities. With support from state of Hawai'i, my hope is that CRB Response Team could expand their scopes of controlling CRB population that has been plaguing Oahu for years now and protect other islands from facing heavy consequences like we have at Oahu.

While this Bill is for short-term management initiatives, it is also my hope that support from the state of Hawai'i to be continuous, as research and implementation of biocontrol and devising of other new control methods are long-term processes that will take some times. With continuous joint effort put in by University of Hawai'i, state government of Hawai'i, federal government , and other interested entities, my hope is that CRB population to be controlled from expanding and eventual eradication of CRB from the Hawaiian Islands. Loa'a ka lanakila no ka hana pa'akikī. The victory is achieved through hard work.

SB-686

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 12:38:30 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/31/2025 1:50:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Annie Liu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear members of the committees,

I write in strong support of SB686. As a conservation planner who works with numerous farmers and landowners across Oahu, I have seen the destruction and concerns that CRB has spread across island communities. Contaminated mulch piles and death of coconut trees, including rare specimens in botanical collections, are preventable, but the state is doing too little to spread awareness, funding, and resources.

I ask you to please support the measures in the bill to fund outreach, research, and inspection efforts. Coconuts are a vital part of Hawai'i's culture and food system, and the destruction that CRB has been causing must be mitigated as soon as possible to prevent further spread and both cultural and economic loss.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this critical issue,

Annie

SB-686

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 12:57:48 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/31/2025 1:50:00 PM

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

Comments:

Dear Senators,

Please pass SB686 to stop the spread of, and eradicate the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB). I live in the mauka, back-roads of Waimanalo, where several tree-trimming companies dump their mulch. As a result the CRB has infected about 30 palms just on the upper parts of 3 roads surrounding us. I walked along Kakaina St., Kakaina Pl., Waikupanaha, and Mahailua St, and counted and photographed the CRB damage to trees. I uploaded the pics onto the CRB website, but before I could finish the next day, their office called and said they didn't want any more data for Oahu, that they are only taking data for the outer islands. I was outraged. Oahu is considered a lost cause, and it's so frustrating. The problem in Waimanalo is at least (7) times worse than it was 6 months ago judging from my neighbor's report of the number of CRB larva and beetles his dog finds on their ag lot.

We have lost the war with the CRB here in the farmlands, and now I am left to cut down my 70' ft., 50 yr. old Royal Palm to to the tune of \$3500 to avoid it falling on my house, and I will lose its erosion control for my property too, requiring replanting. I have one smaller Royal Palm, 20 yrs. old, that is also infected. It's going to cost me at least \$400 a year to treat it., or \$175 every two months for root injections (if the treatments work). I don't know how qualified these arborist's are. **The list of trained personnel this bill offers would be helpful.** It's expensive to treat CRB, especially on a fixed budget, but I need the tree to live for control erosion. **The homeowner "canopy treatment" subsidy of SB686 is a welcome feature of this bill, one which brings some relief and hope to us who have been negatively affected by the state's complacency in treating this pest.**

The bills' training feature seems good, but **unless tree-trimmer's are given: 1) a nearby place to dump their infected palm tree rubbish, OR 2) some incentive for the special handling of the infected trimmings, it is likely reinfestations will result.**

SB686's funding for research on the biocontrol of the CRB is the ultimate hope for our state in eradicating the pest. Please vote yes on SB686. Thank you.

LATE

SB-686

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 1:51:11 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/31/2025 1:50:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christa Leigh	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I strongly support this bill in regards to the CRB infestation. I live and work on the north shore of Oahu where the CRB has had a massive hit to our coconut trees, royal palms, banana plants as well as important native plants. As you all know this bill is a great step in the right direction but a much larger scale initiative is needed! The funds that are in this bill is a small amount in relation to how much this will cost. I personally have 64 royal palms around 50 feet tall these palms were a gorgeous asset to our home and property. Even after trying to fight it and spending thousands of dollars our palm tree expert has said give up the fight. The north shore is completely infested and is now a massive nest for the CRB to spread from. It sickens me that the state knew about this for 12 years and is only stepping up now. We need to focus on the killing the nests/bad areas and protecting the outer islands. I have called the invasive species committee and they said they are focusing on the outer islands but really can we look at the terrible areas as well and killing the nest. I do understand UH will get these funds for research but the research should have been done 12 years ago, right now we need ACTION. There is several local companies creating traps and I highly ask and beg the legislators who support this bill to look into these companies and help your residence who are impacted by this infestation. My royal palms were worth a massive amount of money and I don't have the cash to cut them all down..WE NEED YOUR HELP! I will keep reaching out and begging for help. This pest will soon impact our food supplies, local farmers, the bee population and the beauty Hawaii is known for if it is not handled in a timely manner. Thank you for your time!

LATE

SB-686

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 7:12:09 PM

Testimony for HRE on 1/31/2025 1:50:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elaine Ikenaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in favor of bill SB686 and in support of the CRB program. Our community needs help in controlling the invasive species! If this program is discontinued, our island will be in jeopardy in losing the beautiful coconut trees.