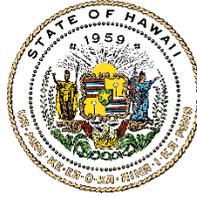


**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

**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  
**DEAN D. UYENO**  
ACTING 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 Committee on  
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**Monday, March 11, 2024  
1:00 PM**

**State Capitol, Conference Room 224 & Via Videoconference**

**In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 2644 HOUSE DRAFT 2  
RELATING TO LITTLE FIRE ANTS**

House Bill 2644 House Draft 2 appropriates funds to support the Hawai'i Ant Lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the FY 2025 Executive Supplemental Budget Request.**

The Legislature has declared that invasive species are the biggest threat to Hawai'i's economy, environment, tourism, health, and way-of-life of its residents, and no invasive species encapsulates this devastation better than the little fire ant. This bill would provide desperately needed funding for the Hawai'i Ant Lab (HAL) to fully fund current staff and add new staff on islands that are seeing a serious increase in little fire ant infestations.

Managing little fire ants has become a multi-agency effort among the Island Invasive Species Committees, Hawai'i Ant Lab, and the Department of Agriculture (DOA). Hawai'i Ant Lab is a project under the University of Hawai'i Pacific Cooperative Studies Unit and has no regulatory authority to enter private property for survey and treatments, conduct inspections, or manage high-risk pathways. They rely solely on voluntary consent to do work on private property. The DOA does have this regulatory authority and is a critical partner in the management of little fire ants and other pests.

The functions, roles, and authorities of each organization need to delegate where they work and ultimately where they lead efforts. For example, it would make sense for the Hawai'i Ant Lab and the Island Invasive Species Committees to lead efforts in residential areas and the DOA to work with nurseries and other horticulture businesses to ensure they are free of little fire ants and other pests that can be transported on plant products.

In recent years, the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC), through the Department and the DOA, helped fund HAL. Still, current funding levels, including \$500,000 from the legislature in FY24, was not enough to prevent HAL from furloughing their staff this January. This comes at a critical time when infestations on O'ahu are on the rise and moving to a place where continued management is the only option. Kaua'i has two large infestations, one of which is located along a major waterway and will take a dedicated on-island team, which currently does not exist, to manage and control those infestations.

Given the crisis of little fire ants, this measure would help address the short and long-term needs to control this major pest.

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

**DEXTER KISHIDA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

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

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

**MARCH 11, 2024  
1:00 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 224**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2644, HD2  
RELATING TO LITTLE FIRE ANT**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill 2644, HD2. This bill recognizes the Hawaii Ant Lab as the leading organization in addressing little fire ant infestations, with support of the Department of Agriculture, Plant Pest and Disease Control branch; and appropriate funds to support the Hawaii Ant Lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State. The Department offers the following comments.

Little fire ants are one of the most significant new pests to establish themselves in Hawaii in the past 30 years. When first detected, the Plant Pest Control Branch recognized the potential impact of this species but the Department and partners including USDA, the University of Hawaii, and others, did not have the tools to adequately address this pest. It is for this reason the Plant Pest Control Branch pursued funding which resulted in the creation of the Hawaii Ant Laboratory (HAL). HAL worked closely with staff at the Plant Pest Control Branch to develop novel and now common place control techniques for little fire ants. It is the belief of the Department, some of the core capacity of the program should belong within the Department. The Department has not had entomological specialists, which has been problematic for the Department



especially when beetles alone have more diversity than birds, reptiles and mammals combined. Ants and other social insects pose unique challenges for research and control as their unique social structures give them profound abilities to adapt to control strategies. For instance, early work in the biocontrol of little fire ant failed because the colony will quarantine elements of the colony that are sick. Ants (not just little fire ants) pose diverse impacts to our agriculture and environment. For instance, ants are the most common source of rejections of exports from Hawaii (not little fire ant but other species). While the Department appreciates the role and functioning of the Hawaii Ant Laboratory, the department similarly believes that ants are serious enough to warrant dedicated, sustained funding to coordinate the diverse needs required for the detection, management, research and control of invasive ant species and the contextual basis of operational knowledge at Federal, state, and local levels to advance our ability to detect, protect, and respond to invasive ant species.

In recognition of this, the Department proposes the following so long as it does not impact the budget priorities set forth in the Executive Budget Submittal: 1) creation of an exempt entomologist position within the Plant Pest Control Branch to serve as the state's lead on LFA and invasive ant issues in recognition of the specialized background and skills required to lead such an effort (SR-26 \$78,000); 2) support the development of new facilities for the plant pest control branch to allow rigorous research and development into invasive ants as this critical work was delayed due to a lack of adequate research space until little fire ants became established on Hawaii island (mobile unit \$1 M); and 3) provide funding to support the Hawaii Ant Laboratory to work in partnership with Plant Pest Control Branch (\$500,000).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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

March 11, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

**TESTIMONY ON HB 2644, HD2**  
**RELATING TO LITTLE FIRE ANTS**

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference  
1:00 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 HB 2644, HD2**, which appropriates funds to support the Hawai'i ant lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State.

Invasive species have become one of the most devastating problems impacting Hawai'i. Many invasive species are damaging Hawai'i's environment and economy. Agriculture has a vested interest in this matter. 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. Control measures take time to develop, leaving farmers and ranchers at risk. This is inconsistent with the State's goal of increasing self-sufficiency and sustainability.

HFB recognizes the harm that the little fire ant has caused to farms and businesses, as well as the quality of life of those affected by the pest. Adequate funding for the Hawai'i Ant Lab funding is critical to support their little fire ant mitigation and eradication efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.



The Senate  
Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
Monday, March 11, 2024  
1:00 PM Conference Room 224  
State Capitol

### **Testimony in Support of HB2644 HD2**

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

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) is **in support of HB2644 HD2, Relating to Little Fire Ants**, which appropriates funds to support the Hawai'i Ant Lab (HAL) in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State.

Little fire ants (LFA) are a serious threat to native species, people, and pets, and also threaten agriculture and other outdoor industries. For example, there is a serious shortage of agricultural workers in Hawaii, and the painful stings and other health impacts of LFA adversely impact working conditions and the ability to retain these workers in LFA-infested areas. LFA also impacts livestock and can increase sap-sucking plant pests which impact crops. The funds and positions made available by HB2644 HD2 would provide critical support for managing infestations, conducting extension services, and continuing to develop and refine tools and methods to manage LFA and other serious ant pests.

HAL is a world leader on researching and developing the methods and tools for the control and eradication of LFA. As LFA is spreading across the State, this research is needed to support existing control needs and to develop new options for LFA response. HAL also provides extension services to help communities control impacts on their properties on Hawaii Island.

For locations where LFA are not widely established, HAL's staff provides on-the-ground response to control LFA infestations or to support each island's control efforts. To achieve the local eradication of an infestation, at least eight applications of ant bait must be made at intervals over a period of a year. These baits must be placed throughout the affected area, including in trees, a process that most community members cannot meet to achieve local eradication.

HAL has struggled to secure funding for its critical work and had to furlough and reduce hours for its existing staff. LFA is still spreading on Hawaii Island, is rapidly spreading across Oahu, and there are large infestations that will need significant efforts on Kauai. On Maui, the Maui Invasive Species Committee receives significant support from the County and is carrying out successful effort to respond to LFA infestations in the County, but relies on HAL's research, tools, and collaborative help.

HB2644 will provide funding for HAL to add positions on Oahu, where LFA is rapidly spreading and eradication may still be possible. The bill also provides much-needed support for HAL's community outreach, which is required for a successful LFA control program.

It is critical that HAL has sufficient funding to staff its operations and continue research on LFA management. The additional funding for HAL proposed in HB2644 will support HAL's activities and allow HAL to add staff positions and continue its work across the State.

CGAPS appreciates that this bill also articulates that this work be conducted by HAL in collaboration with the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture's Plant Pest Control Branch. Mahalo for the opportunity to support HB2644 HD2 and for consideration of our testimony.

Aloha,



Christy Martin  
CGAPS Program Manager



Stephanie Easley  
CGAPS Legal Fellow



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Mason Scharer  
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Kaipo Kekona  
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India Clark  
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman  
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Ted Radovich  
Waimanalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura  
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska  
Kauai

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 HB2644.**

This investment is not only crucial for the well-being of our farmers, but also for the overall health and sustainability of our local communities. The Hawaii Farmers Union recognizes the significance of the Hawaii ant lab's efforts and the importance of their continued support. We urge all policymakers to rally behind HB2644 and appropriate the necessary funds to ensure the Hawaii ant lab can effectively address little fire ant infestations statewide. Together, we can safeguard our agricultural industry, protect our communities, and preserve the unique beauty and biodiversity of our beloved state.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Kaipo Kekona, President HFUU/HFUF

**HB-2644-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/8/2024 4:01:48 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nancy Redfeather	Testifying for Ka Ohana O Na Pua	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Board of Ka Ohana O Na Pua enthusiastically supports a high level of funding for the Hawai'i Ant Lab for it's continued operations and research into Hawaii's most dangerous invasive species the Little Fire Ant.

The Hawai'i Ant Lab is our most professional and effective invasive species organization that provides both research and education to communities statewide so that we can more successfully combat the spread of the Little Fire Ant. Honestly I don't know where we would be without them. I work to control the spread of LFA in my Kona community, so I know first hand why we need to be giving these folks our complete support.

I once heard EO Wilson say, that he had visited entire islands in the South Pacific that had been abandoned because they had become unliveable. Hawaii's precious ecosystem is worth protecting and preserving for all future generations. Please be generous with your funding, it will be proven in the future, that your funding made the difference between having quality of life, and having to leave. Mahalo!

# ***SAH - Subcontractors Association of Hawaii***

***1188 Bishop St., Ste. 1003\*\*Honolulu, Hawaii 96813-2938***

***Phone: (808) 537-5619 ✦ Fax: (808) 533-2739***

March 13, 2024

Testimony To: House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce  
Representative Mark M. Nakashima, Chair

Presented By: Tim Lyons, President

Subject: S.B. 2977 – RELATING TO UNLICENSED CONTRACTORS.

Chair Nakashima and Members of the Committee:

I am Tim Lyons, President of the Subcontractors Association of Hawaii. The SAH represents the following nine separate and distinct contracting trade organizations.

HAWAII FLOORING ASSOCIATION

ROOFING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII

HAWAII WALL AND CEILING INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII

TILE CONTRACTORS PROMOTIONAL PROGRAM

PLUMBING AND MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII

SHEETMETAL AND AIR CONDITIONING NATIONAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII

PAINTING AND DECORATING CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

PACIFIC INSULATION CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

8 March 2024  
BIISC  
23 E Kawili St  
Hilo, HI 96771  
[biisc@hawaii.edu](mailto:biisc@hawaii.edu)



Attn: Committee on Agriculture and Environment  
RE: HB2644

Aloha,

The Big Island Invasive Species Committee would like to express our support for HB2644, providing funding for the Hawai'i Ant Lab (HAL).

The threat that LFA pose to the environment, economy, and way of life in Hawaii cannot be overstated. Successful treatment in infested areas can take a year or more, and on Hawaii island, where the ants have been established for 30 years, maintaining an ant-free property requires treatment *in perpetuity* as residents must regularly apply barriers and monitor their properties to prevent re-infestation. Already, residents have told us of friends and neighbors who have moved away, unable to live with the constant stings.

A 2015 report by the University of Hawaii predicted that without serious intervention on the Big Island, little fire ants will cost the agricultural industry \$6 billion over the next 30 years. Farmers here report often that they are unable to find workers to harvest when the stinging ants fall from trees onto the faces and the eyes of pickers. LFA carry with them their own food sources: plant pests like aphids, mealy bugs, and whiteflies, a constant bane to farmers and gardeners that bring additional costs for control. In other Pacific islands, farmers have abandoned their ancestral farms due to LFA infestation.

Since 2016, BIISC has offered a community support program targeted at the community level to encourage neighbors to work together and mobilize one another. The research generated by the Hawaii Ant Lab is integral to our program, allowing us to bring up-to-date solutions to our residents to fight LFA. HAL has developed effective, safe, and easy-to-use treatments that the community can embrace and use, and they continue to pursue critical research into new and better methods that can be used in Hawai'i to combat LFA while providing critical assistance in eradication efforts on Oahu, Maui, and Kauai.

We also fear the importation of the deadly Red Imported Fire Ant (RIFA), which is spreading across the world. HAL staff monitor ant populations airports and ship ports, forming an early detection system that will hopefully allow us to respond and eradicate any new invasions before the window of possibility slams shut -something that happens far too often with insects, as we've seen many times in recent years.

We strongly support this bill, and hope you will see how essential and important it is to provide this funding. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.

Franny Brewer  
Manager



# SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

## SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

March 11, 2024

1:00 PM Conference Room 224

### In SUPPORT of:

**HB2104 HD1: RELATING TO THE HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL**

**HB2131 HD2: RELATING TO THE TWO-LINED SPITTLEBUG**

**HB2133 HD1: RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

**HB2139 HD1: RELATING TO INVASIVE SPECIES**

**HB2644 HD1: RELATING TO LITTLE FIRE ANTS**

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Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Committee Members,

On behalf of our over 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS HB2104 HD1, HB2131 HD2, HB2133 HD1, HB2139 HD1, and HB2644 HD2**, which will help to mitigate the ongoing and future impacts of invasive pests on our native ecosystems, cultural practices, food security, public health, economy, and the overall quality of life of present and future generations.

Hawai'i's history provides us with a host of lessons regarding the wide-ranging and potentially irreversible damage that invasive species can inflict on our islands and ways of life. Invasive plants and wildlife have overtaken entire watersheds, impacting not just native habitat but also reducing aquifer recharge, increasing our vulnerability to floods and wildfires, and smothering our nearshore reefs and waters with runoff. Parasites and other pests have impacted local food production and increased the use of toxic pesticides on farms and in home gardens, risking both public health as well as threatening stream and nearshore species critical to our aquatic ecosystems. Invasive animals have also extirpated native species, continue to threaten others with outright extinction, and continue to undermine public health by acting as vectors for zoonotic diseases. Most recently, the spread of invasive pests such as the little fire ant, coconut rhinoceros beetle, hala scale, two-lined spittlebug and others will require substantial and long-needed policies and investments over the long-term, to prevent additional and even greater impacts to our islands and our future generations.

Accordingly, the Sierra Club strongly supports the much needed policies and investments contemplated in these measures. More financial support is critical for the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council to fulfill its biosecurity mission; funding for targeted campaigns to address the little fire ant and two-lined spittlebug are critical to preventing the ecological, cultural, agricultural, public health, and economic impacts of these pests; financial support for businesses and organizations to engage in invasive species control and eradication will engage more of the community in the all-hands-on-deck fight to combat their spread; and



# SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

agricultural invasive species placards will encourage agricultural producers to proactively employ best management practices and other measures to prevent and address invasive species on agricultural lands.

The Sierra Club emphasizes that quarantine requirements will also be critical to filling a gap in our regulatory toolbox that has allowed the sale of infested plants and other communities – a gap that has likely contributed to the establishment of coconut rhinoceros beetle on O‘ahu, and the ongoing spread of little fire ants across the islands. **The provisions of HB2758 HD2, scheduled for a hearing before this Committee and the Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts on March 12, would help to fill this regulatory gap and many others, and the Sierra Club accordingly strongly supports that measure as well.**

Much remains uncertain as we continue to reckon with the consequences of Hawai'i's longstanding failure to enact critical biosecurity protections. However, it is certain that much stronger action, including but not limited to the proposals in the aforementioned bills, will be necessary to mitigate or prevent the worst of these and other future impacts to our lives and that of our children and future generations.

Accordingly, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS** these measures. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-2644-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/9/2024 4:44:18 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jacqueline S. Ambrose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Yes to appropriating funds to support the Hawaii ant lab in mitigating the effects of little fire ants in the State

**HB-2644-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 7:48:01 AM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
J Ashman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure.

**HB-2644-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/10/2024 12:35:14 PM

Testimony for AEN on 3/11/2024 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Beverly Heiser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair Richards, and Committee Members,

I Strongly Support HB 2644 HD2.

I live on the Windward side where Little Fire Ants have begun to spread. While it has not been detected on our property so far, I believe immediate action is required to stop the spread, and hopefully it's not too late. We have mango, breadfruit, satsuma, guava, and banana trees and two dogs on our property. I dislike using anything except natural pesticides, and only when needed. We already have a variety of invasive species and plant diseases that can be difficult to control such as white flies, fruit flies, mealy bugs, other ant types and fungal infections. Little Fire Ants can cause blindness in pets.

Food sustainability is important to our island culture and our future. Controlling invasive pests is crucial to farmers and individuals who love to garden and grow different fruits and vegetables. The more invasive species the greater the need to use harmful pesticides.

Please provide your support for HB 2644 HD2.