

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

36

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 03, 2025

RE: H.B. No. 643
H.D. 1

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems, to which was referred H.B. No. 643 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE COCONUT RHINOCEROS BEETLE PROGRAM,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to:

- (1) Establish short-term management initiatives for the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Response Program; and
- (2) Appropriate funds to support the Program's activities and positions.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Land and Natural Resources; Department of Agriculture; University of Hawai'i System; Hawaii Invasive Species Council; two members of the Kauai County Council; Department of Agriculture of the County of Maui; Department of Research and Development of the County of Hawaii; Office of Economic Development of the County of Kauai; Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species; Hawai'i Farm Bureau; O'ahu Invasive Species Committee; Kauai Invasive Species Committee; Big Island Invasive Species Committee; and numerous individuals. Your Committee

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received testimony in opposition to this measure from Malama Aina Landscape and Masonry Design, LLC; and one individual.

Your Committee finds that the coconut rhinoceros beetle can have devastating impacts on palm species that are foundational to the State's agricultural economy, cultural heritage, and ecosystems. Your Committee further finds that the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Response Program, a coordinated partnership among the University of Hawaii, United States Department of Agriculture, Hawaii Department of Agriculture, and other key organizations, investigates new control methods and best practices to combat the coconut rhinoceros beetle. This measure ensures that the program incorporates strategic short-term management initiatives and has sufficient funding and personnel.

Your Committee notes that the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Response Program has been primarily funded by the federal government and that the program may or may not receive continued funding later this year if continued funding is not reapproved.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Including the island of Kauai among the islands to be served by the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Response Program;
- (2) Clarifying that the University of Hawaii shall perform canine inspections in coordination with the Department of Agriculture on high-risk cargo moving between islands;
- (3) Deleting language related to subsidizing container fumigation of high-risk materials traveling between islands;
- (4) Changing the appropriation allocations to unspecified amounts;
- (5) Appropriating an unspecified amount for three drones to be used on Hawaii island and the islands of Maui and Kauai;
- (6) Specifying the types of positions being established for biocontrol research;



- (7) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (8) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

Your Committee respectfully requests your Committee on Finance, should it deliberate on this measure, to consider an appropriation allocation amount of \$15,000 for training tree trimmers, arborists, and the landscaping industry; \$160,000 for subsidizing canopy treatments for residential palm owners; \$25,000 for extending deployment of coconut rhinoceros beetle response teams to Hawaii island and the islands of Maui, Molokai, Kauai, and Lanai; \$250,000 for canine inspections for high-risk cargo moving between islands; \$60,000 for drones; and \$200,000 for one Technician position and two Graduate Student positions for biocontrol research.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Agriculture & Food Systems that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 643, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 643, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Higher Education.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Agriculture & Food
Systems,


KIRSTIN KAHALOA, Chair



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