

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 11 2025

RE: S.B. No. 686
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2025
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committees on Higher Education and Agriculture and
Environment, to which was referred S.B. No. 686 entitled:

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

beg leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent 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 Coconut Rhinoceros
Beetle Response Program's activities, including
establishment of positions.

Your Committees received testimony in support of this measure
from the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Department of
Agriculture, Hawaii Invasive Species Council, University of Hawai'i
at Mānoa College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resilience, two
members of the Kaua'i County Council, Kauai Invasive Species
Committee, Big Island Invasive Species Committee, Hawai'i Farm
Bureau, Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i,
North Shore Chamber of Commerce, Coordinating Group on Alien Pest
Species, Hawai'i Food+ Policy, and fourteen individuals.



Your Committees received comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General.

Your Committees find 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 Committees further find that the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Response Program is a coordinated partnership among the University of Hawaii, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Hawaii Department of Agriculture, and other key organizations that has developed the expertise and methodology to combat and prevent infestations. Your Committees additionally find that emergency response funding from the USDA is ending as the infestation is no longer considered an emergency after ten years since initial detection in the State. Accordingly, this measure establishes and funds key positions within the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle Response Program to ensure that infestations may continue to be combated or prevented.

Your Committees note the concern raised by the Department of the Attorney General that pursuant to the Hawaii State Constitution, this measure requires language identifying it as a law of statewide concern, and language establishing appropriate standards for state agencies to issue grants.

Accordingly, your Committees have amended this measure by:

- (1) Inserting language identifying it as a law of statewide concern;
- (2) Inserting language establishing appropriate standards for the University of Hawaii to issue grants subsidizing canopy treatment for residential palm owners and container fumigation of high-risk materials traveling between islands;
- (3) Changing the appropriations to unspecified amounts;
- (4) Inserting an effective date of July 31, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
- (5) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.




Your Committees note that this measure, as amended, contains unspecified appropriation amounts. Should your Committee on Ways and Means choose to deliberate on this measure, your Committees respectfully request that it consider appropriating the following amounts:

- (1) \$15,000 for training tree trimmers, arborists, and the landscaping industry on the current best management practices about coconut rhinoceros beetles;
- (2) \$160,000 for subsidizing canopy treatments for residential palm owners;
- (3) \$250,000 to perform canine inspections for coconut rhinoceros beetles for high-risk cargo moving between islands;
- (4) \$200,000 for an unspecified number of full-time equivalent permanent positions for biocontrol research within the University of Hawaii; and
- (5) Amounts to be requested by the University of Hawaii for:
 - (A) Extending deployment of coconut rhinoceros beetle response teams to Hawaii island and the islands of Maui, Molokai, and Lanai when coconut rhinoceros beetles are detected; and
 - (B) Subsidizing container fumigation of high-risk materials traveling between islands.

As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committees on Higher Education and Agriculture and Environment that are attached to this report, your Committees are in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 686, as amended herein, and recommend that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 686, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committees on Higher Education
and Agriculture and
Environment,



MIKE GABBARD, Chair



DONNA MERCADO KIM, Chair



The Senate
Thirty-Third Legislature
State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Higher Education
HRE

Bill / Resolution No.:* SB 680	Committee Referral: HRE/AEN, WAM	Date: 2/4/2025 3/31/2025		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure. If so, then the previous decision was to: _____				
The Recommendation is: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended 2312 </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments 2311 </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Hold 2310 </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Recommit 2313 </div> </div>				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
KIM, Donna Mercado (C)	X			
KIDANI, Michelle N. (VC)	X			
FUKUNAGA, Carol	X			
HASHIMOTO, Troy N.	X			
FEVELLA, Kurt	X			
TOTAL	5			
Recommendation: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted </div>				
Chair's or Designee's Signature: <div style="text-align: center; font-family: cursive; font-size: 1.2em;">Michelle N. Kidani</div>				
Distribution: <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; font-size: 0.8em; margin-top: 5px;"> Original File with Committee Report Yellow Clerk's Office Pink Drafting Agency Goldenrod Committee File Copy </div>				

*Only one measure per Record of Votes

Record of Votes
Committee on Agriculture and Environment
AEN

*Only one measure per Record of Votes