

JOSH GREEN
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

1151 PUNCHBOWL ST, #325
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

VOTING MEMBERS

DAWN CHANG
DEPARTMENT OF LAND & NATURAL
RESOURCES

SHARON HURD
HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

KATHLEEN HO, D.Env
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

PARWINDER GREWAL, Ph.D.
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

MARY ALICE EVANS
BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT &
TOURISM

DEXTER KISHIDA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Chelsea Arnott, HISC Coordinator on behalf of
HISC Co-Chair Sharon Hurd and Co-Chair Dawn N.S. Chang

House Committee on
WATER & LAND

Thursday, January 30, 2025
9:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 411 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 299
RELATING TO THE HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

House Bill 299 appropriates funds for the Native Resources and Fire Protection Program and the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council to ensure their long-term viability and continue to control and eradicate invasive species in the State. **The Hawaii Invasive Species Council (Council) supports this measure.**

Since its inception in 2003, the Council has received an annual appropriation that supports interagency programs and projects that address gaps between agency mandates and advance our collection knowledge through research and development of new tools. In FY20, the Council received an increase to their appropriation making the baseline \$5.75 million. The majority of funding is distributed through a competitive grant process where projects are submitted through an online application system in early May. An evaluation committee comprised of designated staff members from each of the Council departments reviews each application based on the Council funding priorities. Each application receives a score that is then discussed in an open meeting where the applicants are invited to attend to answer any questions from evaluators. The evaluation committee drafts a recommended budget that is then presented to voting members of the Council for approval at a public meeting. This process provides transparency on how projects are awarded and ensures that the most pressing needs are being addressed.

The additional funding would allow a much needed increase to the operations of the Island Invasive Species Committees, better invest in research and biocontrol, marine biosecurity, pest surveillance at critical control points, and increase staffing for Council program support that would include a data and grants manager. Council funds are important to leveraging federal dollars. For FY23 and FY24, the Council secured \$4.6 million from the Department of Defense's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program to support a range of invasive species work across the state. Council funding provided much of the 50% match requirement.

The proposed increase to Council funding would bring the baseline to \$10 million. The majority of the funding would still be available through the competitive grant process but prioritized to the projects mentioned above. A breakdown of Council FY25 funding is provided in the attached page along with what was requested.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

FY25 Summary:

HISC Budget Summary	FY25
Total Requests from Proposals	\$8,083,419.17
Appropriation:	\$5,750,000
After Restriction (10%) & DOFAW Overhead (7%)	4,779,230
HISC Support, HBIN, Weed Risk Assessment	\$465,797.09
Multi-agency pest monitoring at critical control points	\$240,056.11
Remaining for competitive grant process	\$4,059,457

Programmatic Awards:

Project Name	HISC Awarded Amount	Total Requested
Big Island Invasive Species Committee (BIISC)	\$850,166	\$1,741,939
Oahu Invasive Species Committee (OISC)	\$762,500	\$1,844,233
Maui and Molokai Invasive Species Committee (MISC/MoMISC)	\$725,074	\$950,000
Kauai Invasive Species Committee (KISC)	\$714,369	\$1,340,730

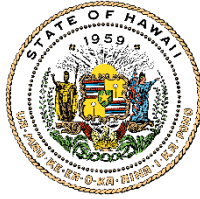
Project Awards:

Project Name	HISC Awarded Amount	Total Requested and Application
UH: Development of an environmental DNA (eDNA) tool for early detection of invasives and monitoring for spread of Unomia in Hawai'i	\$43,274	\$132,511.00
UH CTAHR: ROD Outreach Extension Program / 6-mo. Salary	\$17,713	

		\$54,238.41
UH CTAHR: Tracking the spread of ramie moth, <i>Arcte coerula</i> , a Pest of Māmaki and other nettles in Hawai‘i”	\$20,884	\$71,474
Demonstrating efficacy of large-scale mosquito control using Bti larvicide to facilitate recovery of native Hawaiian forest birds	\$117,374	\$117,376.00
DLNR DAR: Ballast Water and Hull Fouling	\$85,000	\$85,000
Hawaii Ant Lab: Statewide Little Fire Ant Monitor and Control	\$670,323	\$1,000,000
CGAPS Staffing Program-Outreach	\$52,780	\$83,500

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
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 House Committee on
WATER & LAND

Thursday, January 30, 2025
9:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 411, and Via Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 299
RELATING TO THE HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

House Bill 299 appropriates funds for the Native Resources and Fire Protection Program and the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (Council) to continue to control and eradicate invasive species statewide. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure.**

The Department administers the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council, and the Department's Director co-chairs the Council alongside the Director of the Hawai'i Department of Agriculture (HDOA). The Council is a critical policy-level forum that joins state department leadership with legislators to provide strategic direction and statewide coordination to prevent and manage invasive species.

Annual funding for the Council is provided through LNR402. Most of this appropriation is distributed through a competitive grant process to support interagency projects and programs statewide. Grant proposals are reviewed by an evaluation committee comprised of staff from the Department, HDOA, the University of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Department of Health, Hawai'i Department of Transportation, and the Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. This committee drafts a recommended budget and presents it to the Council for approval annually. However, funding has historically covered only a portion of the total grant requests received.

This bill provides a much-needed increase from \$5.75M to \$10M annually. Funding the Council fills gaps between agencies, supports research that improves the detection and management of pests, and allows for timely action as grant funds can be spent by Council partners immediately.

Department programs have received funding through the Council's competitive grants through LNR 402, allowing the Department to provide leadership for specific projects for natural resources

protection. Since FY16, the Council has provided \$1.14M to Department-based projects, including a planner position for the Division of Aquatic Resources' ballast water and hull fouling program and a contract to rear mosquitos for the landscape-level control of avian diseases that threaten Hawai'i's remaining forest birds. The Department also manages other projects, such as the island-based invasive species committees that control invasive plants that threaten the State's watersheds. Without dedicated Council funding, these efforts would not have existed, and invasive plants like *Miconia* would have replaced native forests across the State.

The Department strongly recommends that the increased appropriation be recurring to ensure the long-term sustainability of invasive species management efforts.

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

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
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TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2025
9:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 411 & VIDEOCONFERENCE

HOUSE BILL NO. 299
RELATING TO THE HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Lamosao and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on House Bill No. 299 relating to the Hawaii Invasive Species Council, which appropriates funds for the Native Resources and Fire Protection Program and Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) to ensure their long-term viability and continue to control and eradicate invasive species in the State.

The Department of Agriculture (Department) supports this measure. The HISC and the projects it funds are an important component of enabling the State to achieve its goal of increased statewide biosecurity. The funding of projects by HISC enables the funded programs to fill some of the gaps in biosecurity-aligned agency mandates until said agencies are able to absorb these functions on an on-going basis.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





House of Representatives
Committee on Water & Land
Thursday, January 30, 2025
9:00 am Conference Room 411 & Videoconference
State Capitol

Testimony in Support of HB 299

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Committee,

The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) is **in support of HB 299**, which appropriates funds for the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC).

HISC is composed of the Director or Chairperson of the Department of Agriculture (HDOA), Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), Department of Health, Department of Transportation, and Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, and the President of the University of Hawaii (UH), or their designated representative. (HRS 194-2) It is co-chaired by the Chairperson of HDOA and the Chairperson of DLNR. The Co-Chairs and the Council set HISC's priorities and approve its actions. This inter-agency structure is working well to carry out policy-level direction for invasive species response efforts across departmental boundaries.

During 2024, HISC organized and facilitated the development of action and response plans, by country, for little fire ant (LFA), coconut rhinoceros beetle (CRB), and coqui frog pursuant to the Interagency Memorandum of Understanding for High-Priority Pests signed by leadership from HDOA, DLNR, and UH. Pests do not respect boundaries between agricultural lands, conservation areas, residential areas, and other land uses. The action and response plans ensure that response work is efficient and identifies the entity with the regulatory authority and/or appropriate expertise and capacity to respond across boundaries and actions.

Under the guidance and approval of the HISC co-chairs and Council, HISC staff was able to move proposed administrative rules to address identified high-impact invasive species through the rulemaking process in 2024. HISC voted to initiate rulemaking on May 29, 2024, and the rules are now awaiting final signatures for adoption.

In addition to work carried out directly by HISC, almost 90 percent of HISC funds are used to provide intra-governmental grants through a process that allows state, county, and federal offices to submit requests for funding activities that complement existing programs in the State by:

1. Expanding the reach of, or filling gaps between agency mandates or existing agency programs, and/or
2. Advancing our collective knowledge and capacity through research and development of new tools.

A recommended allocation of the grant funds is developed through a transparent and collaborative process, with the HISC Coordinator working directly with agencies to understand if an agency plans to fund a project using their funds, or if HISC funding is the only option. The Council members approve the final grant allocations.

HISC's interagency composition and its coordinating role in filling gaps and extending agency capacities are critical to invasive species response in Hawaii and we hope this Committee will move this bill forward.

Mahalo for your consideration of our testimony.

Aloha,



Christy Martin
CGAPS Program Manager



Stephanie Easley
CGAPS Legal Fellow



SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

January 30, 2025

9:00 AM

Conference Room 411

In **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS** of **HB299**: RELATING TO THE HAWAI'I INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of our over 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS WITH AMENDMENTS HB299**, which recognizes the vital and foundational role that the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) and its island invasive species committees (ISCs) play in our biosecurity strategy, but which proposes to provide the Council with less funding than what it was provided during the last fiscal year.

HISC and its ISCs have proven to be incredibly effective at holding the line against invasive species in our islands, despite extremely limited funding and a lack of support from other agencies (such as the Department of Agriculture) assigned their own unique roles in our biosecurity framework. They are able to combine specialized expertise, field knowledge, cross-agency coordination, and community relationships to support the all-hands-on-deck fight to monitor, manage, and eradicate myriad invasive species throughout the islands, in areas ranging from forests to open spaces to even businesses and homes. **Notably, they have been able to successfully prevent or eradicate dozens of outbreaks of invasive species on every island, from fireweed to pampas grass to little fire ants, saving us from untold millions of dollars in damages and protecting our environment, food security, cultural integrity, local businesses, and residents from the significant and potentially irreparable impacts,**

However, our biosecurity challenges are many, and the ongoing spread of coconut rhinoceros beetles on Kaua'i and the continual detections of little fire ants in new areas on O'ahu, Kaua'i, and Maui demonstrate the need for much greater investments in their work to safeguard our islands from the devastating impacts of these and other invasive pests that will inevitably reach our shores. This measure appropriately recognizes this funding need in its preamble.

Nonetheless, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i notes that **the amount of funding this measure proposes to provide to the HISC – the one proven effective and comprehensive biosecurity entity currently existing – appears to be \$1.5M per year less than the**



SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I

\$5.75M that was appropriated to LNR402 last year. Notably, the \$5.75M appropriated last year was still insufficient to meet the full \$14M funding requests of both UH and ISC programs to support activities from weed control, to managing Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death, to recovering our dying native forest birds from mosquito infestations, among many, many other initiatives.

To be clear: it is not just our watersheds, water security, food security, economic stability, public health, and quality of life that could be irrevocably impacted if we do not make appropriate investments in our biosecurity framework – it is that of our children, grandchildren, and future generations as well.

Accordingly, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS WITH AMENDMENTS** HB299, and increase, rather than decrease, the amount the legislature invests in HISC and its efforts – and by extension, in the health and future of our islands and communities.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 11:39:47 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
HCN Warrington	Kupuna for the Moopuna	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Kupuna for the Moopuna is in **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS on HB299**, urging lawmakers to increase, and not decrease, funding for HISC and its essential work in protecting Hawai'i from invasive pests.

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 7:11:25 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan B Roberts Emery	Green Party of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Lomoso, and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Green Party of Hawai'i, we are in Strong Support of HB299, a bill to fund the Hawai'i Invasive Species Committee. The proposed \$4.25 M is less than what HISC received last year and instead of taking a step backwards we ask to move forward with the funding as an Amendment to increase the budget. The Green Party of Hawai'i offers our Support with Amendments HB299.

Mahalo Nui,

Green Party of Hawai'i

Susan RobertsEmery

Co Chair GPH

Paauilo



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

January 30, 2025

Testimony in Support of HB299: Relating to the Hawaii Invasive Species Council

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice-Chair Lamosao, and Members of the House Water and Land Committee,

We, Melodie Aduja and Alan Burdick, are testifying on behalf of the Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii in strong support of HB299, which appropriates funds for the Native Resources and Fire Protection Program and the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) to ensure their long-term viability and continue to control and eradicate invasive species in the State.

Key Points of Support:

1. **Protecting Native Resources:** HB299 provides essential funding to protect Hawaii's native resources from the devastating impacts of invasive species. By supporting the HISC and the island-based Invasive Species Committees, this bill ensures that we can continue to manage and eradicate invasive pests that threaten our ecosystems, cultural heritage, and quality of life.
2. **Fire Protection Program:** The bill also supports the Fire Protection Program, which is crucial for preventing and mitigating wildfires that can devastate our natural landscapes and communities. By investing in fire protection, we can reduce the risk of wildfires and protect our environment and residents.
3. **Economic Benefits:** Invasive species cause millions of dollars in damages to agriculture, tourism, and natural resources each year. By funding the HISC and its programs, HB299 helps prevent these economic losses and supports the long-term sustainability of Hawaii's economy.
4. **Community Involvement:** The HISC and its Committees have a proven track record of partnering with communities to detect, eradicate, and manage invasive species. This collaborative approach is essential for the success of biosecurity efforts and ensures that residents are actively involved in protecting their environment.

Examples of Harm Due to Invasive Species:

- **Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death:** This fungal disease has killed hundreds of thousands of 'ōhi'a trees across Hawaii, threatening native forests and watersheds. The HISC has been instrumental in efforts to combat this disease, but more funding is needed to continue these efforts.

- **Little Fire Ants:** These invasive ants pose a significant threat to agriculture, tourism, and human health. The HISC has successfully eradicated infestations on several islands, but continued funding is necessary to prevent their spread and protect our communities.
- **Miconia:** This invasive plant species has taken over large areas of native forest, displacing native plants and animals. The HISC has made progress in controlling Miconia, but sustained funding is needed to continue these efforts and restore native ecosystems.

In conclusion, the Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii strongly supports HB299 and urges the committee to pass this important legislation. By providing adequate funding for the Hawaii Invasive Species Council and the Fire Protection Program, we can protect our native resources, prevent economic losses, and ensure a healthier and safer future for all residents of Hawaii.

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



Testimony Before The
House Committee on Water and Land (WAL)
IN SUPPORT OF HB299

January 30, 2025, 9:00 a.m., Room 411 & Via Videoconference

We are Olan Leimomi Fisher and Kevin Chang, Kua'āina Advocate and Executive Director, respectively, testifying on behalf of [Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo \(or KUA\)](#). "Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo" stands for "grassroots growing through shared responsibility," and our acronym "KUA" means "backbone." **Our mission is to connect and empower communities to improve their quality of life through the collective care for their biocultural (natural and cultural) heritage, serving as a "backbone organization" that supports creative and community-driven solutions to problems stemming from environmental degradation.** Hawai'i's biocultural resources continue to be negatively impacted by political, economic, and social changes, and the increasing dangers of climate change make fostering and empowering resilient communities acutely critical.

Currently KUA supports three major networks of: (1) over 40 mālama 'āina (caring for our 'āina or "that which feeds") community groups collectively referred to as E Alu Pū (moving forward together); (2) over 60 loko i'a (fishpond aquaculture systems unique to Hawai'i) and wai 'ōpae (anchialine pool systems) sites in varying stages of restoration and development, with numerous caretakers, stakeholders, and volunteers known as the Hui Mālama Loko I'a ("caretakers of fishponds"); and (3) the Limu Hui made up of over 50 loea (traditional experts) and practitioners in all things "limu" or locally-grown "seaweed." **Our shared vision is to once again experience what our kūpuna (ancestors) referred to as 'ĀINA MOMOMA – abundant and healthy ecological systems that sustain our community resilience and well-being.**

KUA supports HB299 with amendments as an incremental step toward 'āina momona.

Communities we work with are intimately familiar with the impacts that invasive species can have on every aspect of life in Hawai'i—jeopardizing our native ecosystems, food security, cultural practices, public health, fire safety, climate resiliency, economy, and overall quality of life. The impacts from invasive pests and noxious weeds may also be irreversible once they are established, eroding cultural practices and resources that Kānaka Maoli communities are perpetuating and regenerating in furtherance of cultural integrity, food self-sufficiency, and connections to 'āina and each other that will carry us through the difficult times ahead. For example, **we have heard several horrifying stories from our network members of Little Fire Ants hugely impacting their mālama 'āina operations and quality of life both personally and professionally.**

Although we support the apparent intent of this bill to increase funding for the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) and the Invasive Species Committees, as written HB299 would not provide adequate funding for HISC at a time when supporting these efforts is imperative. **Please amend this bill to increase, not decrease, the funding for HISC, which has proven its effectiveness in working with communities to tackle our increasing invasive pests.**

Organizations and initiatives in our networks have long dedicated considerable energy and resources to educate and engage their people and the general public to act in defense of our islands from invasive species. These efforts may continue to be in vain if we do not have the support of HISC and its Committees. **We implore you to prioritize our biosecurity systems before it is too late.** 'Āina Momona is not achievable without prioritizing the urgent eradication of these invasive pests to best protect our precious biocultural resources and those that care for them.

Please PASS HB299 with our suggested amendments to increase, not decrease, the funding that HISC requires to meet its proven and effective programmatic needs.
Mahalo nui loa.

Aloha 'Āina Momona no nā kau ā kau.



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e-mail info@hfbf.org; www.hfbf.org

January 30, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND

TESTIMONY ON HB 299
RELATING TO THE HAWAII INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

Conference Room 411 & Videoconference
9:00 AM

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice-Chair Lamosao, 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 299, which appropriates funds for the Native Resources and Fire Protection Program and Hawai'i Invasive Species Council to ensure their long-term viability and continue to control and eradicate invasive species 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.

Proper funding for HISC is critical for protecting Hawai'i's environment and economy and the health and lifestyle of its people through the support of invasive species prevention, control, research, outreach, and planning. This measure will provide necessary resources to HISC to help control and hopefully eradicate invasive species in Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HISC.

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 8:21:07 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire	Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands	Support	In Person

Comments:

Dear Esteemed Members of the Legislature,

I am writing to express my support for House Bill No. 299, which seeks to appropriate additional funds for the Native Resources and Fire Protection Program and the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC). The preservation of Hawaii's unique ecosystems, which are under constant threat from invasive species, is of paramount importance. I commend the legislature for recognizing this issue, but I would like to offer several recommendations to further enhance the effectiveness of this critical initiative.

Funding Adequacy and Sustainability: While the proposed \$4,250,000 annual appropriation is a significant step, I urge you to consider adjustments for inflation to maintain the real value of these funds over time. Additionally, given that less than 50% of competitive grant proposals are currently funded, an increase in the budget might be necessary to address the full scope of Hawaii's invasive species challenges.

Diversification of Funding: To ensure the long-term viability of these programs, exploring alternative funding sources could be vital. This might include federal grants, partnerships with private sectors or environmental organizations, or even the establishment of an endowment or trust fund dedicated to invasive species management.

Strategic Funding Allocation: A balanced approach to fund allocation between operational costs, grants, and direct action would optimize the impact of each dollar spent. Particularly, I recommend prioritizing funding for projects that aim not just at containment but also at eradication and prevention, thereby offering a more comprehensive solution to the invasive species crisis.

Staffing and Expertise: The effectiveness of HISC and related programs heavily relies on the expertise of its staff. Ensuring competitive salaries will be crucial in attracting and retaining the talent necessary for innovative and effective control strategies. Additionally, supporting ongoing training and education for these professionals will keep Hawaii at the forefront of invasive species management.

Public Engagement and Education: Enhancing community involvement through increased funding for education and outreach can foster greater public participation in both prevention and response efforts. I suggest dedicating a portion of the funds to public awareness campaigns to educate residents about the importance of early detection and reporting of invasive species.

Research and Innovation: Investing in research to develop new control methods or technologies is essential. I recommend setting aside funds specifically for innovation, possibly in collaboration with academic institutions to explore biological controls or other sustainable solutions.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Emergency Response: Implementing performance metrics for funded projects will provide insights into what strategies work best, guiding future funding decisions. Moreover, creating an emergency response fund within HISC could allow for rapid action against newly detected threats, preventing minor issues from escalating.

Legislative Support and Policy: Securing bipartisan support for this bill will be crucial for its success. I also encourage the development of policies that could enhance biosecurity measures, acting as a preventive measure against future invasions.

In conclusion, the battle against invasive species requires not only financial resources but also strategic planning and community involvement. I believe that by addressing these recommendations, H.B. NO. 299 can significantly strengthen Hawaii's defense against these ecological threats. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to the continued protection of our state's natural heritage.

Sincerely,

Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire

Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands, HRM



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Kaipo Kekona
State President

Anabella Bruch
Vice-President

Maureen Datta
Secretary

Reba Lopez
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Kohala, Hawai'i

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East Hawai'i

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Andrea Drayer
Ka'ū, Hawai'i

Maureen Datta
Kona, Hawai'i

Fawn Helekahi-Burns
Hāna, Maui

Mason Scharer
Haleakalā, Maui

Kaiea Medeiros
Mauna Kahālāwai,
Maui

Kaipo Kekona
Lahaina, Maui

Kilia Avelino-Purdy
Moloka'i

Negus Manna
Lāna'i

India Clark
North Shore, O'ahu

Christian Zuckerman
Wai'anae, O'ahu

Ted Radovich
Waimānalo, O'ahu

Vincent Kimura
Honolulu, O'ahu

Natalie Urminska
Kaua'i

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the House Water & Land Committee,

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 HB299.**

HB299 provides crucial support for protecting Hawaii's unique ecosystems and local agricultural industries by securing funds for the Native Resources and Fire Protection Program and the Hawaii Invasive Species Council. The agricultural community, deeply intertwined with the health of the environment, stands to benefit significantly from these sustained efforts to control and eradicate invasive species. Invasive species threaten our native flora and fauna and pose serious risks to agricultural productivity and economic vitality. By fortifying these programs, the bill directly addresses the urgent need for resources to manage invasive threats and safeguard agricultural lands.

Hawaii's farmers play a vital role in sustaining local food production and contributing to the state's economy. However, they face considerable challenges from invasive species that can damage crops, degrade soil quality, and increase the need for expensive and environmentally harmful chemical controls. Allocating resources through HB299 empowers the Hawaii Invasive Species Council to implement strategic prevention, control, and eradication measures, thereby reducing the burden on farmers and fortifying the resilience of the agricultural sector.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Hunter Heavilin
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Farmers Union

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 6:47:19 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Uilani Naipo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: I support this measure and all efforts of Hawai'i Invasive Species Council and Hawaii's Biosecurity Program.



House of Representatives
Committee on Water & Land
Thursday, January 30, 2025
9:00 AM Conference Room 411
State Capitol

Testimony in support of HB299

Aloha Chair Hashem, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Committee,

The Kauai Invasive Species Committee (KISC) is **in support of HB299**, *Relating to the Hawaii Invasive Species Council*, which provides additional funding for Hawaii Invasive Species Council to continue to control and eradicate invasive species.

The Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) is an inter-departmental collaboration of State Departments that provides interagency coordination and direction on invasive species issues in Hawaii. As noted in HB299, the majority of HISC funding allocations are redirected towards HISC's competitive grant program. HISC's competitive grant program provides support to projects and programs that help fill gaps between agency mandates and existing agency programs. Every year the need for these grants far exceeds HISC's available funds.

HISC funding supports on-the-ground response efforts including early detection of new high-impact species, control and eradication of high priority invasive plant and pest species, development of innovative management tools, and the development and implementation of community outreach and educational campaigns. Targeted species include species that adversely impact Hawaii's native biodiversity, natural resources, watershed function, agriculture, and our communities. HISC grants provide support for projects such as Hawaii Ant Lab, each island's Invasive Species Committee, including KISC, and the Division of Aquatic Resources ballast water and biofouling program, among many others.

KISC appreciates the legislature's focus on biosecurity and invasive species this legislative session. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB299 and additional funding for HISC.

Mahalo for your continued support,

Tiffani Keanini
Manager - Kauai Invasive Species Committee

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 10:58:38 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Lyerly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HB299 with the amenment attached. Mahalo

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 11:37:30 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
tia pearson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB299 recognizes that HISC serves as a critical foundation of our invasive species response, eradication, and management framework, and that there is a substantial need to provide it and its island invasive species committees with more funding to bolster our biosecurity framework. However, it appropriates less funds than was provided to HISC last year. Please increase the amount to make sure our islands don't get overwhelmed with invasive species.

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 12:41:56 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bo Breda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice-Chair Kusch, and members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

My name is Bo Breda and I SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS HB299.

I strongly agree with the opening section of this bill, regarding the need to increase funding for the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) and the island Invasive Species Committees that have been the core foundation of our all-hands-on-deck fight to protect our islands and future generations from invasive species. However, this bill appears to provide HISC with far less funds than it received last year - \$3M over the next fiscal biennium - in a moment when we clearly need to invest more than ever before in shoring up our biosecurity defenses. **Please amend this measure to increase, rather than decrease, the funding that will be provided to HISC.**

With dozens of successful eradications from Kaua'i to Hawai'i Island of pests and noxious weeds ranging from fireweed to pampas grass to little fire ants, HISC and its Committees have proven their great effectiveness in fighting invasive species with extremely limited resources. Their work has undoubtedly prevented millions upon millions of dollars' worth of damages and the potentially irreversible degradation of our islands' environmental and cultural integrity, and our quality of life. Meanwhile, they continue to serve as an integral foundation of community-driven efforts to detect, eradicate, and manage myriad invasive species across our islands.

With the Department of Agriculture struggling to expend the historic funding it received last year for biosecurity programs, and with no clear Department of Agriculture plan to fulfill its own unique roles in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive pests, it is absolutely critical that we double down in our investments in HISC and its Committees.

I urge you to **PASS HB299 with AMENDMENTS to increase, and not decrease, HISC funding for the next fiscal biennium, sufficient to fully meet its core needs and anticipated programmatic requests.**

Sincerely,
Bo Breda

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 12:44:45 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I urge you to **PASS HB299 with AMENDMENTS to increase, and not decrease, HISC funding for the next fiscal biennium, sufficient to fully meet its core needs and anticipated programmatic requests.**

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 12:46:14 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaleiheana-a-Pohaku Stormcrow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice-Chair Kusch, and members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

My name is Kaleiheana Stormcrow and I SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS HB299.

I strongly agree with the opening section of this bill, regarding the need to increase funding for the Hawai‘i Invasive Species Council (HISC) and the island Invasive Species Committees that have been the core foundation of our all-hands-on-deck fight to protect our islands and future generations from invasive species. However, this bill appears to provide HISC with far less funds than it received last year - \$3M over the next fiscal biennium - in a moment when we clearly need to invest more than ever before in shoring up our biosecurity defenses. **Please amend this measure to increase, rather than decrease, the funding that will be provided to HISC.**

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With the Department of Agriculture struggling to expend the historic funding it received last year for biosecurity programs, and with no clear Department of Agriculture plan to fulfill its own unique roles in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive pests, it is absolutely critical that we double down in our investments in HISC and its Committees.

I urge you to **PASS HB299 with AMENDMENTS to increase, and not decrease, HISC funding for the next fiscal biennium, sufficient to fully meet its core needs and anticipated programmatic requests.**

Mahalo for your time,

Kaleiheana Stormcrow

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 1:03:17 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqueline S. Ambrose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

YES to - Appropriates funds for the Native Resources and Fire Protection Program and Hawai'i Invasive Species Council to ensure their long-term viability and continue to control and eradicate invasive species in the State.

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 1:11:56 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia Blair	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Increase funding for HISC and it's essential work protecting Hawaii from invasive pests.

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 1:55:48 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hideki Kimukai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice-Chair Kusch, and members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

My name is Hideki Kimukai and I SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS HB299.

I strongly agree with the opening section of this bill, regarding the need to increase funding for the Hawai‘i Invasive Species Council (HISC) and the island Invasive Species Committees that have been the core foundation of our all-hands-on-deck fight to protect our islands and future generations from invasive species. However, this bill appears to provide HISC with far less funds than it received last year - \$3M over the next fiscal biennium - in a moment when we clearly need to invest more than ever before in shoring up our biosecurity defenses. **Please amend this measure to increase, rather than decrease, the funding that will be provided to HISC.**

With dozens of successful eradications from Kaua‘i to Hawai‘i Island of pests and noxious weeds ranging from fireweed to pampas grass to little fire ants, HISC and its Committees have proven their great effectiveness in fighting invasive species with extremely limited resources. Their work has undoubtedly prevented millions upon millions of dollars’ worth of damages and the potentially irreversible degradation of our islands’ environmental and cultural integrity, and our quality of life. Meanwhile, they continue to serve as an integral foundation of community-driven efforts to detect, eradicate, and manage myriad invasive species across our islands.

With the Department of Agriculture struggling to expend the historic funding it received last year for biosecurity programs, and with no clear Department of Agriculture plan to fulfill its own unique roles in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive pests, it is absolutely critical that we double down in our investments in HISC and its Committees.

I urge you to **PASS HB299 with AMENDMENTS to increase, and not decrease, HISC funding for the next fiscal biennium, sufficient to fully meet its core needs and anticipated programmatic requests.**

Sincerely,
Hideki Kimukai

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 2:09:58 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Grandinetti	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice-Chair Kusch, and members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

My name is Andrew Grandinetti and I SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS HB299.

I strongly agree with the opening section of this bill, regarding the need to increase funding for the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) and the island Invasive Species Committees that have been the core foundation of our all-hands-on-deck fight to protect our islands and future generations from invasive species. However, this bill appears to provide HISC with far less funds than it received last year - \$3M over the next fiscal biennium - in a moment when we clearly need to invest more than ever before in shoring up our biosecurity defenses. **Please amend this measure to increase, rather than decrease, the funding that will be provided to HISC.**

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I urge you to **PASS HB299 with AMENDMENTS to increase, and not decrease, HISC funding for the next fiscal biennium, sufficient to fully meet its core needs and anticipated programmatic requests.**

Sincerely,
Andrew Grandinetti, PhD

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 2:20:51 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matthew Gurewitsch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice-Chair Kusch, and members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

My name is Matthew Gurewitsch, and I SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS HB299.

Biosecurity is a top priority and should be recognized as such. The fight against invasive species never ends. We snooze, we loose to the little fire ants and other critters that wreak havoc on our quality of life. We need more resources in this fight--funding cuts (as proposed in the bill) are not the way to go. Do the job right.

As the opening section of the bill makes clear, increased funding for the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) and the island Invasive Species Committees is *urgent*. The Council and the Committee are the bedrock of our continuing efforts to protect our islands and future generations from invasive species. The need grows ever more imperative. Yet the bill calls for funding cuts, when what conditions demand is more resources. **Please amend this measure to increase, rather than decrease, the funding that will be provided to HISC.**

With dozens of successful eradications from Kaua'i to Hawai'i Island of pests and noxious weeds ranging from fireweed to pampas grass to little fire ants, HISC and its Committees have proven their great effectiveness in fighting invasive species with extremely limited resources. Their work has undoubtedly prevented millions upon millions of dollars' worth of damages and the potentially irreversible degradation of our islands' environmental and cultural integrity, and our quality of life. Meanwhile, they continue to serve as an integral foundation of community-driven efforts to detect, eradicate, and manage myriad invasive species across our islands.

With the Department of Agriculture struggling to expend the historic funding it received last year for biosecurity programs, and with no clear Department of Agriculture plan to fulfill its own unique roles in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive pests, it is absolutely critical that we double down in our investments in HISC and its Committees.

I urge you to **PASS HB299 with AMENDMENTS to increase, and not decrease, HISC funding for the next fiscal biennium, sufficient to fully meet its core needs and anticipated programmatic requests.**

Sincerely,
Matthew Gurewitsch

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 4:31:32 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephen Canham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Stephen Canham, I live in Kaneohe, and **I SUPPORT HB299--WITH AMENDMENTS.**

I strongly agree with the opening section of this bill, regarding the need to increase funding for the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) and the island Invasive Species Committees that have been the core foundation of our all-hands-on-deck fight to protect our islands and future generations from invasive species. However, this bill appears to provide HISC with far less funds than it received last year - \$3M over the next fiscal biennium - in a moment when we clearly need to invest more than ever before in shoring up our biosecurity defenses. **Please amend this measure to increase, rather than decrease, the funding that will be provided to HISC.**

With dozens of successful eradications from Kaua'i to Hawai'i Island of pests and noxious weeds ranging from fireweed to pampas grass to little fire ants, HISC and its Committees have proven their great effectiveness in fighting invasive species with extremely limited resources. Their work has undoubtedly prevented millions upon millions of dollars' worth of damages and the potentially irreversible degradation of our islands' environmental and cultural integrity, and our quality of life. Meanwhile, they continue to serve as an integral foundation of community-driven efforts to detect, eradicate, and manage myriad invasive species across our islands.

With the Department of Agriculture struggling to expend the historic funding it received last year for biosecurity programs, and with no clear Department of Agriculture plan to fulfill its own unique roles in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive pests, it is absolutely critical that we double down in our investments in HISC and its Committees.

I urge you to **PASS HB299 with AMENDMENTS to increase, and not decrease, HISC funding for the next fiscal biennium, sufficient to fully meet its core needs and anticipated programmatic requests.**

No one wants little fire ants, albezia trees, coqui frogs, macaranga, etc. etc. We have waited almost too long to act. Please act responsibly and courageously NOW.

Yours,

Stephen Canham, PhD

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 4:33:51 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Ware	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice-Chair Kusch, and members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

My name is Diane Ware and I SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS HB299.

I strongly agree with the opening section of this bill, regarding the need to increase funding for the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) and the island Invasive Species Committees that have been the core foundation of our all-hands-on-deck fight to protect our islands and future generations from invasive species. However, this bill appears to provide HISC with far less funds than it received last year - \$3M over the next fiscal biennium - in a moment when we clearly need to invest more than ever before in shoring up our biosecurity defenses. **Please amend this measure to increase, rather than decrease, the funding that will be provided to HISC.**

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With the Department of Agriculture struggling to expend the historic funding it received last year for biosecurity programs, and with no clear Department of Agriculture plan to fulfill its own unique roles in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive pests, it is absolutely critical that we double down in our investments in HISC and its Committees.

I urge you to **PASS HB299 with AMENDMENTS to increase, and not decrease, HISC funding for the next fiscal biennium, sufficient to fully meet its core needs and anticipated programmatic requests.**

Sincerely,
Diane Ware, moku o Ka'u 96785

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 4:44:19 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
KEALA FUNG	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice-Chair Kusch, and members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

My name is Keala Fung and **I SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS HB299.**

I strongly agree with the opening section of this bill, regarding the need to increase funding for the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) and the island Invasive Species Committees that have been the core foundation of our all-hands-on-deck fight to protect our islands and future generations from invasive species. However, this bill appears to provide HISC with far less funds than it received last year - \$3M over the next fiscal biennium - in a moment when we clearly need to invest more than ever before in shoring up our biosecurity defenses. **Please amend this measure to increase, rather than decrease, the funding that will be provided to HISC.** We are in a crucial battle with coconut rhinoceros beetle, little fire ants, and coqui frogs on Oahu, on top of everything else we are already combatting. This makes it extremely important that funding is INCREASED, for invasive species control.

With dozens of successful eradications from Kaua'i to Hawai'i Island of pests and noxious weeds ranging from fireweed to pampas grass to little fire ants, HISC and its Committees have proven their great effectiveness in fighting invasive species with extremely limited resources. Their work has undoubtedly prevented millions upon millions of dollars' worth of damages and the potentially irreversible degradation of our islands' environmental and cultural integrity, and our quality of life. Meanwhile, they continue to serve as an integral foundation of community-driven efforts to detect, eradicate, and manage myriad invasive species across our islands.

With the Department of Agriculture struggling to expend the historic funding it received last year for biosecurity programs, and with no clear Department of Agriculture plan to fulfill its own unique roles in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive pests, it is absolutely critical that we double down in our investments in HISC and its Committees.

I urge you to **PASS HB299 with AMENDMENTS to increase, and not decrease, HISC funding for the next fiscal biennium, sufficient to fully meet its core needs and anticipated programmatic requests.**

Sincerely,
Keala Fung, Honolulu Hawaii

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 5:36:57 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
ANDREW ISODA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice-Chair Kusch, and members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

My name is Andrew Isoda and I SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS HB299.

I strongly agree with the opening section of this bill, regarding the need to increase funding for the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) and the island Invasive Species Committees that have been the core foundation of our all-hands-on-deck fight to protect our islands and future generations from invasive species. However, this bill appears to provide HISC with far less funds than it received last year - \$3M over the next fiscal biennium - in a moment when we clearly need to invest more than ever before in shoring up our biosecurity defenses. **Please amend this measure to increase, rather than decrease, the funding that will be provided to HISC.**

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With the Department of Agriculture struggling to expend the historic funding it received last year for biosecurity programs, and with no clear Department of Agriculture plan to fulfill its own unique roles in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive pests, it is absolutely critical that we double down in our investments in HISC and its Committees.

I urge you to **PASS HB299 with AMENDMENTS to increase, and not decrease, HISC funding for the next fiscal biennium, sufficient to fully meet its core needs and anticipated programmatic requests.**

Sincerely,
Andrew Isoda
Lahaina, Mau'i

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 6:02:12 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah Pence	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

pass HB299.

sincerely, Deborah Pence

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 6:41:06 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha, I SUPPORT this bill with AMENDMENTS.

Please give the Hawaii Invasive Species Council more than \$4.25M each year over the next two years.

Cutting back on the funding reminds me of the Monthy Python skit where John Cleese is a knight who continues to fight even as King Arthur chops off his limbs one by one.

Cutting back on critical funding makes it that much harder to fight all of the invasives that are multiplying and attacking Hawaii left and right. If it is so easy to cut \$1.5M now, what will you cut off next?

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 6:57:08 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please pass HB299 but AMEND it with desperately needed INCREASED FUNDING - - at the very minimum what was allotted last year in order to continue the difficult irradiation of these horrendous invasives.

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 7:08:58 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chair Kahaloa, Vice-Chair Kusch, and members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

My name is Nanea Lo, and I am writing in **support with amendments for HB299**. As a Kanaka Maoli, Executive Commission Member of the Sierra Club of Hawai‘i, and Board Member of the Hawai‘i Workers Center, I am deeply invested in the protection of our natural and cultural resources.

Hawaii’s watersheds are the foundation of our islands’ water security, and their health is inextricably tied to the management of invasive species. Without healthy watersheds, we cannot sustain our ecosystems, communities, or way of life. The **Hawai‘i Invasive Species Council (HISC)** and the island-based Invasive Species Committees have been on the frontlines of this fight, working tirelessly to prevent, manage, and eradicate destructive pests across various landscapes. However, this work requires robust and consistent funding.

While I appreciate that HB299 seeks to allocate \$4.25 million per year to HISC, this amount falls **\$1.5 million short** of last year’s legislative allocation. Given the severity of threats like **Rapid ‘Ōhi‘a Death, ungulates, fireweed, coqui frogs, and little fire ants**, this is not the time to scale back our investment in biosecurity. Instead, we need to **increase funding** for HISC to ensure they can meet their programmatic needs and build upon their proven successes in community-driven invasive species management.

HISC has demonstrated its effectiveness with limited resources, preventing millions of dollars in environmental and economic damages. Meanwhile, the Department of Agriculture has struggled to expend the historic biosecurity funding it received last year and has yet to provide a clear plan for fully executing its responsibilities. Until such a plan is in place, **it is critical that we double down on supporting HISC, which has the infrastructure and partnerships in place to continue this vital work.**

I urge you to **PASS HB299 with amendments** to **increase, not decrease**, funding for HISC, ensuring that our watersheds, ecosystems, and communities are safeguarded for future generations.

**Me ke aloha ‘āina,
Nanea Lo**

Mō'ili'ili, HI 96826

Executive Commission Member, Sierra Club of Hawai'i

Board Member, Hawai'i Workers Center

Kanaka Maoli / Lineal Descendant of the Hawaiian Kingdom

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 7:28:15 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Madison Owens	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice-Chair Kusch, and members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

My name is Madison Owens and I SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS HB299.

I strongly agree with the opening section of this bill, regarding the need to increase funding for the Hawai‘i Invasive Species Council (HISC) and the island Invasive Species Committees that have been the core foundation of our all-hands-on-deck fight to protect our islands and future generations from invasive species. However, this bill appears to provide HISC with far less funds than it received last year - \$3M over the next fiscal biennium - in a moment when we clearly need to invest more than ever before in shoring up our biosecurity defenses. Please amend this measure to increase, rather than decrease, the funding that will be provided to HISC.

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With the Department of Agriculture struggling to expend the historic funding it received last year for biosecurity programs, and with no clear Department of Agriculture plan to fulfill its own unique roles in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive pests, it is absolutely critical that we double down in our investments in HISC and its Committees.

I urge you to PASS HB299 with AMENDMENTS to increase, and not decrease, HISC funding for the next fiscal biennium, sufficient to fully meet its core needs and anticipated programmatic requests.

Sincerely,

Madison Owens

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 7:53:46 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patrice Choy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB299 with amendments.

We cannot have water without healthy watersheds and we cannot have healthy watersheds if we allow invasive species to continue to run amuck and ruin our pristine and natural resources.

Please prioritize this crisis by funding HISC to the fullest means possible. I recently utilized the Oah'u HISC services to inspect one of our prized ohia trees. I was amazed the assessment and testing service was free and understood through my direct experience how important it is to support the work of the HISC.

Mahalo.

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 9:39:54 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ashley Nishihara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Ashley Nishihara and I SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS HB299.

I strongly agree with the opening section of this bill, regarding the need to increase funding for the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) and the island Invasive Species Committees that have been the core foundation of our all-hands-on-deck fight to protect our islands and future generations from invasive species. However, this bill appears to provide HISC with far less funds than it received last year - \$3M over the next fiscal biennium - in a moment when we clearly need to invest more than ever before in shoring up our biosecurity defenses. Please amend this measure to increase, rather than decrease, the funding that will be provided to HISC.

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I urge you to PASS HB299 with AMENDMENTS to increase, and not decrease, HISC funding for the next fiscal biennium, sufficient to fully meet its core needs and anticipated programmatic requests.

Sincerely,

Ashley Nishihara

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 10:27:32 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katherine Fryer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly agree with the opening section of this bill, regarding the need to increase funding for the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) and the island Invasive Species Committees that are a critical foundation of our invasive species response, management and eradication efforts. However, this bill appears to provide HISC with far less funding than it received last year.

I urge you to pass HB299 with amendments to increase HISC funding for the next fiscal biennium, sufficient to fully meet its core needs and anticipated programmatic requests.

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 10:39:45 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aiko Yamashiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly agree with the opening section of this bill, regarding the need to increase funding for the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) and the island Invasive Species Committees. Please amend this measure to increase, rather than decrease, the funding that will be provided to HISC. Invasive species continue to pose a major threat to the health of our environment, our agriculture and other natural resource-based industries, and our cultural practices and connection to land. As a Pacific Islander, I have seen the decimation of coconut trees in other places as a result of slow and uncoordinated responses to the invasive coconut rhinoceros beetle. As a new parent, I am greatly saddened to think that my child may grow up fearful of playing outdoors or with a strong connection to 'āina because of little fire ants. Success with invasive species eradication depends on strategic, strong, and early response. Trying to remediate the problem too late will be hugely expensive or futile. The organizations and agencies leading us in this important work need to be fully resourced. Thank you for your careful consideration of this issue.

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 11:14:55 PM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sarah Moore	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice-Chair Kusch, and members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

My name is Sarah Moore and I SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS HB299.

*I strongly agree with the opening section of this bill, regarding the need to increase funding for the Hawai‘i Invasive Species Council (HISC) and the island Invasive Species Committees that have been the core foundation of our all-hands-on-deck fight to protect our islands and future generations from invasive species. However, this bill appears to provide HISC with far less funds than it received last year - \$3M over the next fiscal biennium - in a moment when we clearly need to invest more than ever before in shoring up our biosecurity defenses. **Please amend this measure to increase, rather than decrease, the funding that will be provided to HISC.***

With dozens of successful eradications from Kaua‘i to Hawai‘i Island of pests and noxious weeds ranging from fireweed to pampas grass to little fire ants, HISC and its Committees have proven their great effectiveness in fighting invasive species with extremely limited resources. Their work has undoubtedly prevented millions upon millions of dollars’ worth of damages and the potentially irreversible degradation of our islands’ environmental and cultural integrity, and our quality of life. Meanwhile, they continue to serve as an integral foundation of community-driven efforts to detect, eradicate, and manage myriad invasive species across our islands.

With the Department of Agriculture struggling to expend the historic funding it received last year for biosecurity programs, and with no clear Department of Agriculture plan to fulfill its own unique roles in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive pests, it is absolutely critical that we double down in our investments in HISC and its Committees.

*I urge you to **PASS HB299 with AMENDMENTS** to increase, and not decrease, HISC funding for the next fiscal biennium, sufficient to fully meet its core needs and anticipated programmatic requests.*

Sincerely,

Sarah Christine Moore

January 30, 2025

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice-Chair Kusch, and members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

My name is Allison Young and I SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS HB299 (Invasive Species Funding) with my partner Joseph Leibrecht.

I am an active resident of Kaua'i, mother of four children, full-time employee at Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative, 'ōlelo Hawai'i and Ahupua'a student at Windward Community College, graduate of Leadership Kaua'i Class of 2024, and volunteer with Mālama Kaua'i. Joey works in endangered seabird conservation for Archipelago Research and Conservation. We are humbled to live on this beautiful island in this amazing state.

The impact of invasive species is detrimental to many Hawaiian species and harms the livelihood of agricultural workers. Endangered species endemic to the Hawai'ian islands are interconnected aspects of the Hawaiian culture and spirituality. In turn, these affect the operations of other economies on Kaua'i, including tourism.

Recently, the Hawaiian Invasive Species Council (HISC) recently gave high priority to the Coqui frog, Little Fire Ant, and Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. The CRB attacks coconut trees, palms, hala, taro, banana, pineapple, and sugarcane. Other prominent examples of HISC's work include protecting the 'ōhia lehua trees from Rapid 'Ōhia Death and honeycreepers from mosquitoes.

In our work, both of us are committed to conserving and protecting Hawai'i's natural resources. We have seen firsthand the impact of invasive species on Kaua'i through Joey's seabird work, which are at risk through feral cats, boars and barn owls. The seabirds are a federal protected endangered species, and their declining numbers financially impact my work and other agencies on Kaua'i.

On a personal level, we have banana and coconut palms in our backyard in Wailua Homesteads, which we enjoy eating as an 'ohana. Over fall and winter break, our 'ohana traveled to the Big Island, and my partner presented me with a ring engraved with images of 'ōhia lehua on them. We told the children about the myths of Pele and hiked through Volcanoes Park. All of these experiences are unique to Hawai'i and teaching the keiki about the mo'olelo, flora and fauna is part of why we love raising our children here.

With the Department of Agriculture struggling to expend the historic funding it received last year for biosecurity programs, and with no clear Department of Agriculture plan to fulfill its own unique roles in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive pests, it is absolutely critical that we increase our investments in HISC and its Committees.

We urge you to PASS HB299 with AMENDMENTS to increase, and not decrease, HISC funding for the next fiscal biennium, sufficient to fully meet its core needs and anticipated programmatic requests.

Please protect our islands and future generations from invasive species.

Mahalo,

Allison Young
Joseph Leibrecht
567 Puuopae Rd.
Kapa'a, HI 96746

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 1:43:26 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynda Nishihara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice-Chair Kusch, and members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

My name is Lynda Nishihara and I SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS HB299.

I strongly agree with the opening section of this bill, regarding the need to increase funding for the Hawai‘i Invasive Species Council (HISC) and the island Invasive Species Committees that have been the core foundation of our all-hands-on-deck fight to protect our islands and future generations from invasive species. However, this bill appears to provide HISC with far less funds than it received last year - \$3M over the next fiscal biennium - in a moment when we clearly need to invest more than ever before in shoring up our biosecurity defenses. Please amend this measure to increase, rather than decrease, the funding that will be provided to HISC.

With dozens of successful eradications from Kaua‘i to Hawai‘i Island of pests and noxious weeds ranging from fireweed to pampas grass to little fire ants, HISC and its Committees have proven their great effectiveness in fighting invasive species with extremely limited resources. Their work has undoubtedly prevented millions upon millions of dollars’ worth of damages and the potentially irreversible degradation of our islands’ environmental and cultural integrity, and our quality of life. Meanwhile, they continue to serve as an integral foundation of community-driven efforts to detect, eradicate, and manage myriad invasive species across our islands.

With the Department of Agriculture struggling to expend the historic funding it received last year for biosecurity programs, and with no clear Department of Agriculture plan to fulfill its own unique roles in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive pests, it is absolutely critical that we double down in our investments in HISC and its Committees.

I urge you to PASS HB299 with AMENDMENTS to increase, and not decrease, HISC funding for the next fiscal biennium, sufficient to fully meet its core needs and anticipated programmatic requests.

Sincerely,

Lynda Nishihara

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 7:13:59 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nara Takakawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloe, Vice-Chair Kusch, and members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee,

My name is Nara Takakawa and I SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS HB299.

I strongly agree with the opening section of this bill, regarding the need to increase funding for the Hawai'i Invasive Species Council (HISC) and the island Invasive Species Committees that have been the core foundation of our all-hands-on-deck fight to protect our islands and future generations from invasive species. However, this bill appears to provide HISC with far less funds than it received last year - \$3M over the next fiscal biennium - in a moment when we clearly need to invest more than ever before in shoring up our biosecurity defenses. Please amend this measure to increase, rather than decrease, the funding that will be provided to HISC.

With dozens of successful eradications from Kaua'i to Hawai'i Island of pests and noxious weeds ranging from fireweed to pampas grass to little fire ants, HISC and its Committees have proven their great effectiveness in fighting invasive species with extremely limited resources. Their work has undoubtedly prevented millions upon millions of dollars' worth of damages and the potentially irreversible degradation of our islands' environmental and cultural integrity, and our quality of life. Meanwhile, they continue to serve as an integral foundation of community-driven efforts to detect, eradicate, and manage myriad invasive species across our islands.

With the Department of Agriculture struggling to expend the historic funding it received last year for biosecurity programs, and with no clear Department of Agriculture plan to fulfill its own unique roles in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive pests, it is absolutely critical that we double down in our investments in HISC and its Committees.

I urge you to PASS HB299 with AMENDMENTS to increase, and not decrease, HISC funding for the next fiscal biennium, sufficient to fully meet its core needs and anticipated programmatic requests.

Sincerely,

Nara Takakawa

HB-299

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 11:16:36 AM

Testimony for WAL on 1/30/2025 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lois berger	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kahaloa, Vice Chair Kusch, and Members of the House Agriculture & Food Systems Committee.

My name is Lois Berger and I **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS HB299**.

I strongly agree with the opening section of this bill, regarding the need to increase funding for the Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) and the island Invasive Species Committees that have been the core foundation of our all-hands-on-deck fight to protect our islands and future generations from invasive species. However, this bill appears to provide HISC with far less funds than it received last year - \$3M over the next fiscal biennium, in a moment when we clearly need to invest more than ever before in shoring up our biosecurity defenses. **Please amend this measure to increase, rather than decrease, the funding that will be provided to HISC.**

With dozens of successful eradications from Kauai to Hawaii Island of pests and noxious weeds ranging from fireweed to pampas grass to little fire ants, HISC and its committees have proven their great effectiveness in fighting invasive species with extremely limited resources. Their work has undoubtedly prevented millions upon millions of dollars' worth of damages and the potentially irreversible degradation of our islands' environmental and cultural integrity, and our quality of life. Meanwhile, they continue to serve as an integral foundation of community-driven efforts to detect, eradicate, and manage myriad of invasive species across our islands.

With the Department of Agriculture struggling to expand the historic funding it received last year for biosecurity programs, and with no clear Department of Agriculture plan to fulfill its own unique roles in preventing the introduction and spread of invasive pests, it is absolutely critical that we double down in our investments in HISC and its Committees. As a taxpayer, I would not object to paying an individual small tax toward these efforts as I believe it is critical. Perhaps a tax like we have on gas or hotel rooms, can we tax something that will be given direct and only to the Dept of Agriculture. This is your expertise on this could be done. But I do believe there is willingness on the public recognizing it's importance as more and more of these pests are greatly impacting our gardens and farms.

I urge you to **PASS HB299 with AMENDMENTS to increase, and not decrease, HISC funding for the next fiscal biennium, sufficient to fully meet its core needs and anticipated programmatic requests.**

Sincerely

Lois Berger